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AUTHOR Wells, Ruth Herman
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ABSTRACT

The suggestions in these booklets are designed to help youth professionals who help children and adolescents with problems, but who have little time. Volume 1 contains answers for helping children and youth deal with apathy, attention deficit disorders, noncompliance, poor motivation, anger problems, and avoiding teen pregnancy. The chapters are: (1) "The Best Negativity and Apathy Busters"; (2) "The Greatest Solutions for the 'Latest' Students"; (3) "Fix the Nix-Master To Say 'Yes' Faster"; (4) "Live Your Life before You Make a Life"; (5) "Reduce the Deficits of Attention Deficit Disorder"; (6) "No Excuses Anger Control"; (7) "Awaken the Sleeping Student"; and (8) "Thinking First Really Works." Volume 2 contains answers for helping children and youth cope with family problems, curtail violence, survive abuse, build peer skills, and manage conduct disorders. The chapters are: (1) "Maximum-Strength Motivation Makers"; (2) "Win the War of the Words"; (3) "What To Do When Children Suffer"; (4) "You Probably Can't Name the #1 Kid Problem"; (5) "Stop Violence before It Strikes"; (6) "Reach and Teach Children from Troubled Homes"; (7) "Peer Skills: Don't Leave Home without Them"; and (8) "Control Uncontrollable Conduct Disorders." (SLD)

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The QUICKEST Kid Fixer-Uppers™

Capsulized Solutions from the *Bright Ideas*™ Resource Newsletters

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Volume 1

Ruth Herman Wells, M.S.
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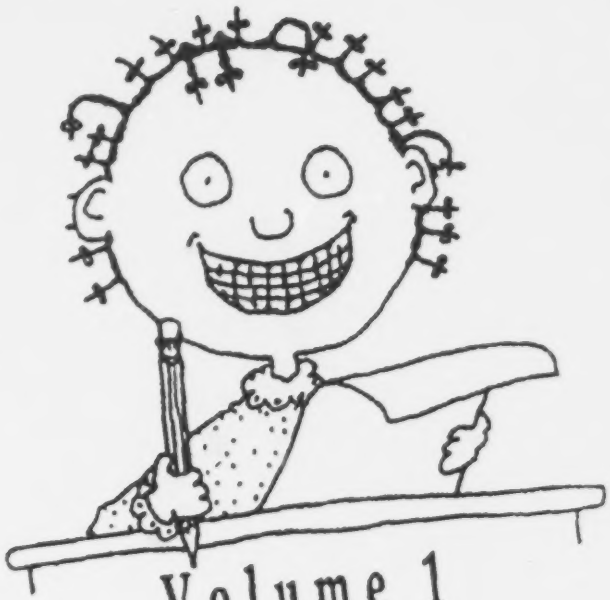

Volume 1

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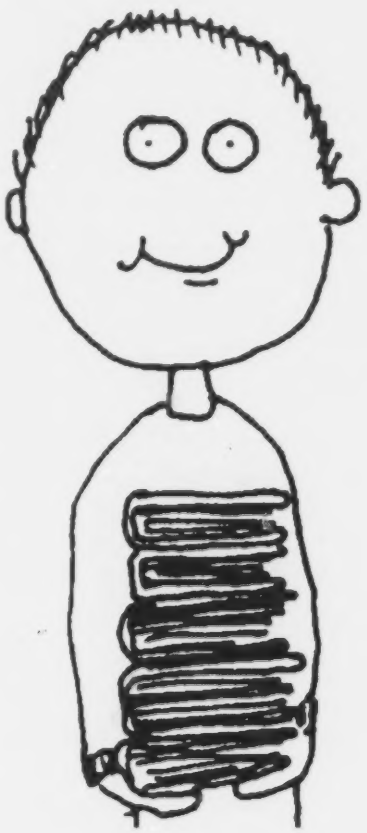

The Quickest Kid Fixer-Uppers

Volume 1

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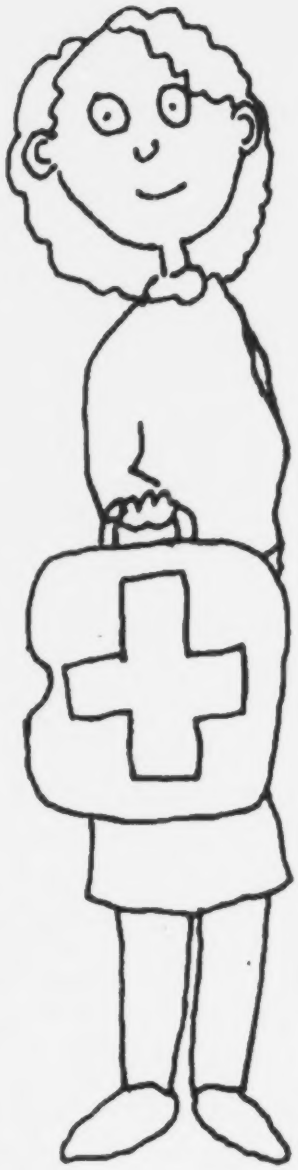
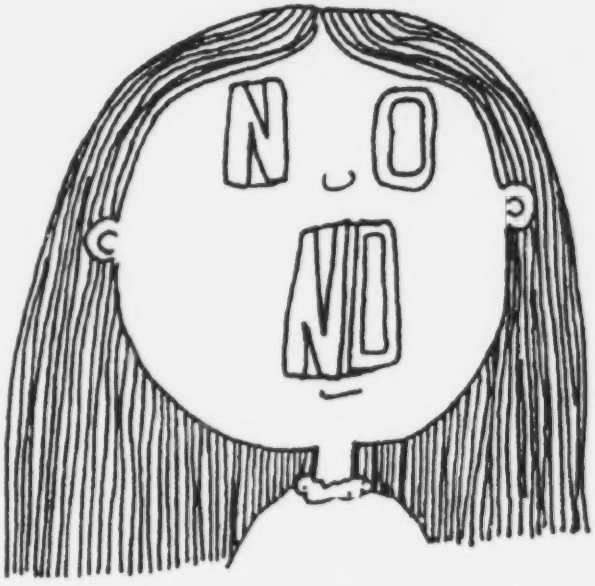


The Best Negativity and Apathy Busters

Many youth are entrenched in negativity, hopelessness and apathy. Their stated life goal is "nuthin'" or to be a drug dealer. Some common interventions can actually cause some kids to become more negative.



Negativity and apathy are seldom random events. The child generally has reason to believe that "nuthin'" is all he can be, perhaps seeing family members or peers ravaged by violence, drugs or other adversity. Despair is a normal reaction that can blunt pain, but sometimes adults focus on attempting to ease the hopelessness in the belief that before the child will create and work for dreams and hopes, she must leave negativity behind. Attempting to take away that buffer can cause some children to become more determined to be nobody. Here are interventions that expose the child to other possible futures without attempting to take away the defensive despair which will diminish or persist as the child's life experiences warrant.

Attitude Adjustment Techniques

If You Did Know

Answering "I dunno" to "What do you want to be?" can start a power struggle.
Strategies: Instead of answering back "Yes, you do know," respond: "If you did know, what might it be?" This approach can catch the student by surprise, and detour past "I dunno."

Funny Futures

Some youth cling more persistently to negative goals if confronted directly.
Strategies: Humor can ease the rigidity. When a youth states a negative goal, respond with a silly remark such as this comment to a burly teen-age boy: "Well, I'd heard you wanted to become a prima ballerina." The youth may grin and offer a more likely response than your's.

Future Homes

Very discouraged children may be unable to imagine positive futures.
Strategies: Play "Future Homes and Gardens." Ask students to draw floor plans or other illustrations of their future home. Becoming able to imagine positive outcomes is important to shaping positive outcomes.

25 Years Later

Some youth may have little experience imagining positive outcomes.
Strategies: Ask the students to write you a letter describing their lives— as though it was 25 years from now. Students who cannot write, can make an audio or video tape, or draw.

A Friend's Future

Some youth won't even speculate about a positive future.
Strategies: Instead, ask these students to speculate about a friend's future. After the student says all the information he actually knows about that peer's plans, ask for more speculation. That information will often be reflective of that child's own hopes, and will offer experience imagining different futures.

Negate Negative Thinking

Here are some thought-provoking ways to help youth reconsider some problematic, potential life paths.

I Won't Need School When I'm a Drug Dealer Some students believe they won't need school because they plan to sell drugs. Expose their faulty logic with this tongue-in-cheek comment: "You're right, and you especially won't need math because your supplier will be completely understanding when you give him too little money for drugs."

My Gang Will Take Care of Me Ask students to find "old" gang members. Assist the students to notice that there are few "old" gang members, and that the ones they find are often either dead or "distressed." Ask students to determine how effectively gang members can care for them if most of them are dead or distressed.

I'll Just Go On Welfare Have students follow news reports and contact the local welfare office to determine how much they could receive on welfare, and for how long. Aid students to develop a budget based on what they would receive, and see how comfortably they could live. Help students estimate the date that welfare could cease to exist.

I'll Make Lots of Money Dealing Drugs According to *The Washington Post*, being a drug dealer is not as fabulously lucrative as many youth imagine, just about $27,000 a year before deducting for lawyers, court fines, guns, ammo, seizures and "unpaid vacations" (jail). Have students estimate and tally these deductions, then subtract that total from the income of the criminals shown in the cartoons below.

Awesome Apathy Adjusters

Bruised Heart: Ask kids who have given up rather than risk defeat, which they would prefer, a bruised heart or a boxed heart.

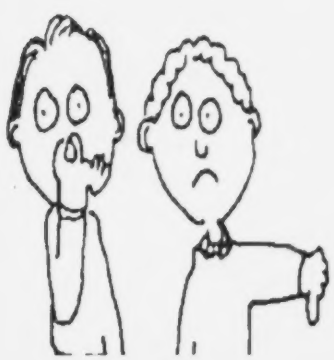
Before and After: To help youth imagine successfully making seemingly impossible personal changes, have them create before and after advertisements for themselves. Provide examples such as weight loss ads.

Change Cage: Younger students can make a "change cage." Wrap a rectangular cardboard box with aluminum foil then create a window in the front of the box that goes up and down. Students insert pictures that portray themselves at each step in the process of making personal changes. Lower the change cage window before inserting each picture, than raise the window and display.

Fate Strikes: For students who insist on considering just one negative option for the future, such as "going on welfare," play "Fate Strikes." Put potential futures on slips of paper; prepare at least 3 slips per student. Students will draw slips from a hat. Slips should include futures such as "In 1997, the new president eliminates welfare."

What You Don't Want to Be: Ask students who vehemently refuse to speculate on future career choices, to list what they *don't* want to be. During the discussion of their dislikes, these youth can be assisted to acknowledge which jobs and careers they would dislike *less* than others.

When Motivation Sags: For youth who have identified positive goals, but sometimes give up on their hopes, obtain a symbol of the goal, such as truck keys for a potential truck driver. Toss the truck keys to the student at a time of discouragement, to remind them of their goals.



Show Students That Crime Doesn't Pay...Nearly as Well as They Imagined

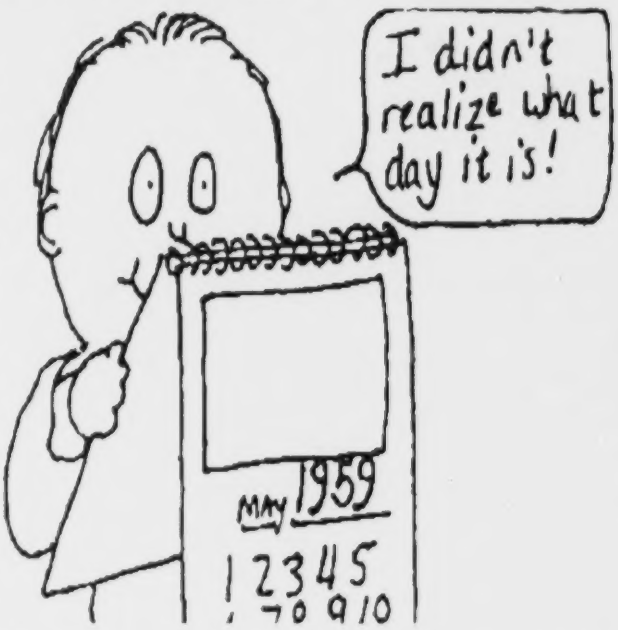
Drug Dealer *Burglar* *Auto Thief* *Robber*

Average annual income: drug dealer, $27,000; burglar, $2,900; auto thief, $18,700; robber $3,500.

The Greatest Solutions for the "Latest" Students

You can be the best teacher or counselor on the planet, but if your students aren't there to be taught or counseled, it doesn't really matter how good you are. The bottom line: kids must be present if you are to successfully work with them.

The bad news is that many kids have problems with promptness. The good news is that often lateness can be rapidly and effectively addressed. Punctuality is another essential school skill we consistently expect without consistently and fully teaching. Once trained to be punctual, many kids show lasting improvement. Here's the latest solutions for your latest students:



The Latest Techniques for the Latest Students

Debunk Excuses

Read aloud a list of excuses for lateness such as "I had to wash my hair," "I had to wait for the mail to come," or "My face was breaking out," then ask the students to identify which are valid reasons to be late. The class will conclude that there were no valid reasons cited. Number and post these bogus excuses so that students can quickly confront each other by number.

Provide Targets

Many students do not have reasonable guidelines to follow on how often to offer excuses. At home, excuses may be constantly offered and readily accepted so you may work with many young people who seem to offer nearly nonstop excuses for everything. Aid the students to set and follow guidelines on how often to be late, then hold them accountable. Relate to the work place, and invite employers to come and share their mandatory attendance standards for their workers, and to describe the specific consequences employees face when they don't meet these requirements. Select employers who work in areas that interest your students.

Teach Promptness

Give the class a list of times, then ask the class members to determine what time they must arrive to be on time for each of those times. For example, the class will indicate that to arrive on time for 8:05 AM, they must arrive at 8:05 AM. Let the class proceed through the list until one student says, "This is stupid. This is easy. We know this." Then you say: "I'm sorry. Yes, we can stop. I didn't know you knew this. If this is so easy, then I guess you will all be able to do it every day." You have gently "tricked" the students into admitting that they do know how to be on time. Excuses such as "I was just a minute late" are now useless.

Teach Planning

Train youth to develop habits conducive to promptness. To teach promptly passing between classes, have students navigate a simplistic, funny maze on paper that represents moving from class to class at school. The maze should include detours such as "chatting with friends" and "finding a pencil". While students are laughing, help them learn missing skills. To develop a morning routine to arrive on time to school, aid students to develop and follow a time plan to wake up, wash up, dress up, eat up, then get up and go. Some younger students may need help to locate or secure a clock or watch to use at home.

Confront Excuses

Students often say that they could be consistently prompt in a "real" job. Confront this by challenging them to be prompt for 2 months at your site. If they can do that, they will have improved their punctuality. If they can't do it, ask where else they will learn those skills without facing job loss, fines, and the other serious sanctions adults can face for lateness to work, tardiness paying fines, and overdue taxes. Assist students to discover that there may not be other opportunities to perfect punctuality skills without having to cope with costly adult sanctions.

4 Steps 4 Stopping Lateness

Here are some maximum-strength, punctuality-makers that can make-over your most tardy students.

Motivate Them Motivation is usually the most important step to stopping lateness because so many students see no reason to be on time. Convincing students that on-time behavior is an essential life skill, often generates more change than any other approach. Some of our best, most effective motivation-makers are listed below.

Identify Causes Students are late for many reasons including distractions, cultural differences, skill deficiencies and poor motivation. To effectively build on-time behavior, identify and address causes of lateness. For example, an elementary student may be late because she lacks adult help to prepare for school. Her problem may be modified by giving her skills to plan a wake up/get ready schedule for arriving on time to school.

Step-By-Step Help Most students can not just instantly start being on time any more than you can just instantly lose ten pounds. Once the source of the lateness has been identified, offer step-by-step help. Many students have not been fully trained to promptly perform routine tasks like arriving promptly, completing homework and attending regularly. Don't assume they have these skills.

Expect Incremental Change Students whose lateness is due to skill deficiencies or cultural differences, may change gradually. Mastering new skills requires time and practice so hold reasonable expectations. Students often detect and react negatively to your impatience. The pace of change may be more rapid in students whose lateness is due to motivation problems. When convinced that punctuality is important, these students can change quite rapidly.

It's Never to Late to Motivate Your Latest Students

Relate to Jobs: Ask students to identify jobs and businesses that they can successfully do and be late whenever they wish, or maybe, never even show up at all. There are none. Assist the class to confront comments such as "I'll just deal drugs" by humorously noting that addicts probably won't even mind waiting if the dealer is late with their fix.

Show the Importance: Students may feel promptness is unimportant. Demonstrate the importance by conducting an experiment. Trial 1: Ask students to duplicate a building blocks model created by the instructor as they watch. Trial 2: Repeat the first trial except now the students "arrive late" and miss the start of the model building. The instructor hides blocks inside the model; the "late" students can't see these pieces. Assist students to compare their results when arriving promptly vs. late, and to determine that lateness impairs learning.

When I'm Grown: Show that promptness is vital to adult living by asking students to answer humorous multiple choice questions about adult lateness. Use questions such as: Julio forgot to pay the water bill again. The water company will a) never notice, b) understand that Julio "just forgot", or c) turn off his water.

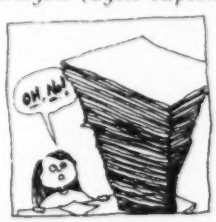
In the Adult World: Bring in bankers, property managers, IRS agents, etc. to discuss the consequences faced by adults who are late paying bills, taxes and performing other required adult chores.

New Role: Ask a student to role-play being the teacher. Offer a reinforcer as the teacher's "paycheck". Ask the "teacher" to aid the class to memorize a number, but have many students arrive late. Aid the "teacher" to see that lateness impedes learning.

Goals and Dreams: Have students list all their goals and dreams then have the class assist each student to cross out all the goals and dreams that require promptness.

Perfectionistic Students Can Have Special Problems with Procrastination

Perfectionism (Causes Fear) *Procrastinate (Become Overwhelmed)* *Paralysis (Cycle Repeats)*



Teach about Dr. Susan Forward's "3 P's of Perfectionism" (from her book, "Toxic Parents") to help students control it.

Fix the Nix-Master to Say "Yes" Faster

No adult ever won a power struggle with a kid, and no adult ever will. The minute you get into a power struggle with a child, you've already lost. Take your "sails" out of their "wind". Do not get caught in "Yes, you will", "No, I won't" battles. Instead, choose interventions that work around the resistance

Nearly nonstop nay-saying is a normal part of development that prepares teens to become independent. Here are techniques to use with youth who evidence normal non-compliance, and those who use behaviors that go well beyond "typical" into seriously defiant:

Terrific Nopes-Busting Techniques

Be Democratic

Who would you work harder for— the boss who was a dictator or the boss who was a participatory manager? Most of us, whether adults or kids, want to have a say at work or school. Allowing youth input prepares them for the self-management they must do throughout life and when adults aren't present to regulate behavior.

Strategies: To win a great prize, have students to play Tic Tac Toe without rules. They will discover that games won't work without rules. Now, have a classroom without rules and a defiant youth as teacher. Role reversals offer fast ways for defiant youth to get a jolting look at their own problem behavior.

Peer Power

Teens may discard adult comments, but consider peer input.

Strategies: Allow peers to suggest solutions to incidents of defiance that involve them. Ask your group to identify jobs and businesses an adult can do and be defiant whenever they want; there are none.

Give a Perspective

Defying authorities can become the top issue above all else.

Strategies: Ask students to list the most important things they want in life. Defying authority will not be listed. Identify to defiant students that they devote much time and energy to a low priority while jeopardizing their top goals. Have students cross out goals that defiance could ruin.

Give Guidelines

Especially students from troubled homes, will have little idea of how often it is okay to be non-compliant.

Strategies: Ask your class to establish a guideline for how often students should decline tasks or challenge authority. Assist the students to craft a guideline that would work in the job setting, then ask the class members to confront each other on excessive non-compliance.

If Everybody Just Says "No"

Help students realize that compliance is not arbitrary but essential.

Strategies: Ask the students to determine the consequences if everyone was non-compliant whenever they wished. Ask what would happen if everybody ignored stop signs, took every item they wanted, blocked traffic, refused to pay taxes, or could enter your house without your okay?

Why Some Kids Just Say "No"

Seriously defiant kids may come from homes struggling with major problems. Here's why they're defiant, and what you can do.

DO

Avoid Battles for Control At home, the child may have discovered that defiance can sometimes lessen the chance of a beating or sexual assault. The child learns that seizing control can sometimes moderate frightening events. They will do almost anything to keep control. *DO:* Avoid wrenching control. Ask the child for solutions, teach compromise. Stress you are on the child's side.

DON'T

Assume Compliance Skills Children from homes affected by problems like domestic violence or substance abuse, may learn yelling and fighting but not basic compliance skills. *DON'T:* Assume every child has the skills, attitude and motivation to comply. You may have to teach that before they can do it.

DO

Expect Incremental Change The defiant child is afraid to release control because at home when control is relaxed, sometimes scary things happen. *DO:* Say that you won't yank control so the child can relax. Align with the child. Say that you don't expect rapid change; most children are more likely to make changes when not feeling pressured or cornered.

DON'T

Forget Conduct Disorders Extremely defiant youth are sometimes conduct disorders who lack remorse or conscience. In mainstream settings, they're the 1% of your kids that can take 99% of your time. *DON'T:* Forget that many common techniques don't work with conduct disorders who are motivated by getting "what I want". Set stiff consequences for defiance. Teach compliance skills and the benefits of complying. Learn about this population.

How to Succeed in Life Without Defying

Address Underlying Anger: It's easy to overlook the causes of extreme defiance, yet addressing the underlying source may be more effective than just confronting the outward symptoms. Kids don't act seriously defiant without a reason. By easing their anger, animosity or hopelessness, you can often ease the intensity or frequency of chronic defiance.

Use Acceptance: Youth have only three ways to respond when given an adult directive. One response is to become oppositional, or they can capitulate. These responses are problematic and should be avoided. Strive instead to elicit acceptance. Like you, youth work best at tasks they accept, compared to those they fight or feel coerced into doing.

Teach About "Yes": Teach kids they can best get authorities to do what they want not by resisting, but by using answers that begin with "yes." Portray "yes" as the magic word teachers and parents seldom hear, that can be very powerful.

Teach Compromise: Many severely oppositional youth are global thinkers, viewing situations in black and white, all-or-nothing terms. Show youth the middle ground, and ask them to identify compromises rather than just say "no".

Keep the Adults Neutral: Teens may rebel against anything adults say. When an adult takes a stand, it will often spark opposition. For important insights, avoid initially voicing a position. Instead, assist peers to voice the view; their opinion may receive consideration.

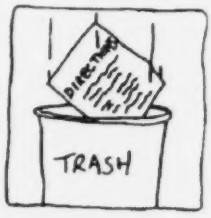
Use Humor: It's hard to stay angry in the face of humor. Assist youth to develop compromises when they claim to be unable. Suggest ridiculous compromises to relax and jolly them into identifying solutions. Offer silly suggestions they could modify to be reasonable: "I think you should do 2,000 extra pages of homework...or, perhaps you could come up with a better idea?"

Teach Alternatives to Defying Directions

You Don't Want to Do It

You Don't Know How to Do it

You Think the Direction is Wrong



Instead of "no," teach youth to say "yes" then state concerns, such as these common problems following directions

Live Your Life Before You Make a Life

Of all youth problems, teen pregnancy may be one of the most urgent. Especially in this time of great youth violence, the relatively quiet phenomenon of babies having babies, can go unnoticed. Ironically, many problems such as violence, family strife, poverty and school failure can have roots in teen pregnancy, creating an unending cycle of social problems.

Pro-active interventions can assist youth to forgo childbearing, and can be used by parents or professionals. The interventions included here are different because they avoid lecturing and preaching, which kids may tune out. These attention-grabbing strategies let youth discover for themselves: the real truth about babies.

Baby Waiting Strategies

Baby Love

A baby can look like a source of love.

Strategies: Without announcing that teen parenting is your focus, ask your girls to name all the actions that they would suggest to a best girlfriend who was feeling unloved. Having a baby is unlikely to be suggested. Highlight this omission, and ask the students to consider how successfully babies can meet other people's needs. Ask students how well do they meet their parents' needs now.

Playing House

A baby can look like the best part of playing house.

Strategies: Expose household management as the complicated chore it is. Have youth balance a checkbook, read rental contracts, interpret prescriptions, manage phone solicitations, fix a broken toilet, and make a budget— all while a (tape recorded) baby bellows and a doorbell and phone sometimes ring.

It Will Be Fun

A baby looks like fun.

Strategies: Ask the kids to take a quick True-False quiz about their future, with questions such as "I like to be woken up a lot at night," "I want to earn less money than everybody else," and "I like dirty, stinky things." They'll respond "False" to most items. Next, say that the title "fell off" the quiz. Pass out the same quiz but now entitled "Is There a Baby in Your Future?" Students will have said "no" to many of the realities of teen parenting such as being woken at night, surviving on welfare, and changing diapers (from the three questions above.)

Baby and Me

Many girls romanticize life with baby.

Strategies: A girl who defers parenting and completes school is likely to earn $330,000 more in her life than a teen mom who quits school. Bring in play money; assist the girls to make budgets based on the actual likely average monthly income of $500 for a teen mom vs. $1100 for a girl who defers parenting. Include diapers, baby sitting, housing, transportation, clothing, food and doctor visits in the budgets. Have veteran teen parents visit and describe the challenges of real-life teen parenting. Ask students to find housing, transportation, leisure activities, food and baby supplies on $500 per month pre-tax income.

Baby's Helpers

Girls may plan to rely on welfare, and are certain that this plan will be satisfactory and available.

Strategies: Have students follow the media coverage of the possible end of welfare. Assist them to learn that many states already limit welfare and place strict requirements on teen moms. Have students contact local welfare officials for the real truth about life on welfare, and the likely possible changes to the welfare system.

Before Baby Makes Two

"I didn't think it would happen to me!" say many pregnant teens. Here are some new ways to put thinking first.

"I Didn't Think" After a positive pregnancy test, many girls state that now they know what they should have done to avoid the problem. Let youth sample the consequences of teen parenting without actually living through them: ask youth to determine the likely "personal pain" costs and the likely financial costs of an unplanned teen pregnancy.

"It Won't Happen to Me" When a girl says that she can "beat the odds" and avoid pregnancy, ask her to defy any other law of nature— such as the law of gravity or speed. When the girl can't, note that she probably can't defy this law of nature either.

"If I'd Known..." Many teen moms bemoan the lasting physical changes, and comment that maybe they wouldn't have gotten pregnant if they'd known. Let others gain this insight. Make 5-6 slips of paper per girl; each slip lists a potential physical consequence of pregnancy such as "I'll never be able to wear a bikini again." Girls draw slips out of a hat, simulating how they would "draw" symptoms as teen moms.

"I Didn't Expect This!" Teach youth to predict the future by guessing outcomes. When they easily do so, assist the youth to acknowledge they can often predict likely consequences, and since they can "guess ahead," they can also often prevent consequences from happening by forgoing risky behaviors.

Before There's a Baby on Board: Banish Those Bogus Beliefs About Babies

Boys, Boys, Boys: Girls who base their entire self-worth on boyfriends, may be more vulnerable to engaging in behaviors that can lead to teen pregnancy. Chip away at this outlook: ask girls to rate the worth of various female achievements ranging from "won a major championship" to "tutored sick children" to "going steady with the cutest boy in town." Assist girls to determine that worth can be based on more than boyfriends.

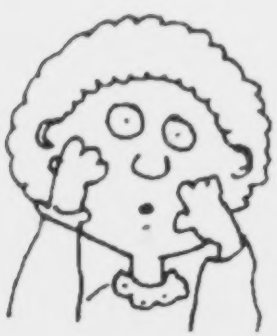
Like a Fish Needs a Bicycle: Some girls believe they can't survive without a boyfriend. Assist girls to determine all the activities that require a boyfriend; there will be few. Next, assist the girls to discuss: Do girls need guys like fish need bicycles?

Risk Factors: The most likely teen to have a baby: the girl who has survived sexual abuse and the girl who has already borne a child. Be alert for these factors, and educate girls who may face one or both of these challenges, about the risk.

Less Risk Factors: Girls with avid interests and dreams that don't mesh well with teen parenting, may be less likely to risk an unplanned pregnancy. Captivate girls with activities they can do today; engender passion for college, career, adventure or travel tomorrow.

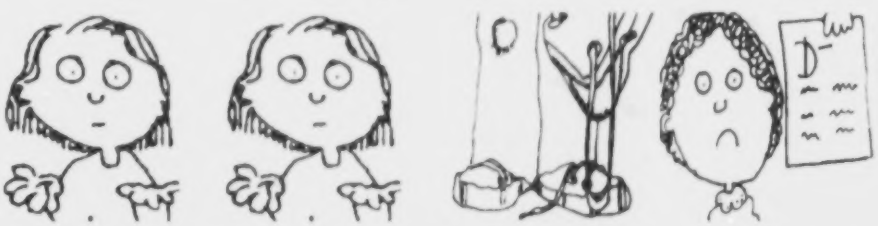
Treasure: To begin to teach about worth, and build self-esteem in girls consumed with "hunting" and pursuing boys, ask them to discuss this statement: The treasure doesn't need to do the hunting.

Younger Than Today: Ask youth to comment on the quality of decisions they made years ago. Assist them to notice that their judgement was poorer then. Discuss if their current skill level may look similarly lacking years from now, and how today's decisions about parenting could be viewed years from now.



The Lasting Cost of an Early Baby: Teen Moms are the Most Likely to...

Go on Welfare *Never Get Off Welfare* *Live in Poverty* *Drop Out of School*



A teen mom may earn $330,000 less in her life than peers who delay pregnancy and finish school.

Reduce the Deficits of Attention Deficit Disorder

Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD) is often misunderstood. If a child is also diagnosed as hyperactive (ADHD), the youth professional or parent may find this child to be among the most perplexing and challenging to work with.

Children diagnosed as ADD or ADHD are not "choosing" to be badly behaved or inattentive; their problems have a physiologic basis. Medication can offer relief, but other interventions can also help while building esteem and skills. Most kids are not systematically and comprehensively trained to be students, but it may be ADD/ADHD youth that experience the most difficulty overcoming this lack of thorough preparation to master specific school skills like focusing, walking down the aisle and sitting at a desk. Until sufficiently trained to perform school skills such as these, the ADD/ADHD student may particularly struggle in school. Here's interventions that can ease the struggle.

Attention-Grabbing Techniques

Teach Visual Tracking

Train youth to have "eyes on teacher". Use a rag doll to show "do" and "don't" behaviors; model the "do" behaviors, then drill the students on the skills. Use a magnet and metal to illustrate how the students' eyes must be "stuck" on the teacher.

Teach Auditory Tracking

Teach students to have "ears" on teacher. Use a rag doll to demonstrate, then model, and drill skills into habits. Give verbal instructions how to locate special treats as a fun way to train and drill listening skills.

Teach Pacing Skills

Train youth to slow rapid action by playing "Make That Move." Played similar to the TV game show, "Name That Tune", as the student is about to speed through a task, such as walking across the room, ask the youth how long it will take to "make that move." Typically, the youth gives an answer such as "10 seconds", then challenge the child by saying "I bet you could make that move in 2 minutes", to which the child responds, "Yeah, I can make that move in 3 minutes", and so on. When the student has identified a reasonable time frame, say "make that move". Now the child must "stretch out" their behavior to complete the task. Use "Make That Move" constantly, with homework and other tasks that the child normally races through.

Teach Distraction Control

Train youth to identify distractions or "attention-grabbers," and to avoid, modify, ignore, or request help with them. Use a loud radio, hair dryers, whistling, musical instruments and other distractions to drill students in a fun way how to spot and manage distractions.

Teach Chair Sitting

Train youth to sit in ways that facilitate learning. Set a timer; when it rings, students check their position. Show what to bring/not bring to their desk area. Bring in appropriate and inappropriate items to illustrate.

A Surplus of Ideas to Manage Attention Deficit Disorder

Here are some specific "do's" and "don't's" to maximize your effectiveness with youth who have ADD/ADHD

DO **Provide Motivation First** The child with ADD/ADHD may not be uncomfortable with the behaviors that concern adults. For example, show them the hazards of moving too fast before offering help to slow down. To gain their interest, assist them to compare the results of moving very rapidly to moving more moderately in activities that are important to them, such as playing sports.

DON'T **Just Ask or Demand** Often, asking or demanding won't work. Instead, teach missing skills in memorable, lasting ways with many repetitions, then drill new skills into lasting habits. Vary the content of the repetitions or you'll receive complaints.

DO **Debunk Labels** If in a special ed class, youth may be taunted. To confront: gather your special and mainstream pupils; pass out thread, and sewing needles with small eyes. Ask students to thread the needles. Many will be unable; note that these students could use "special ed" help with this task. Next, ask students to whistle after eating crackers. Most will need help. Note we can all use "special help" with something; define "special ed" as extra help.

DON'T **Be Impatient or Negative** Many youth with ADD/ADHD quickly sense your frustration and negativity about them. Expect small, incremental improvement. Remember: these kids can no more "just stop it" than you can just lose 10 pounds or stop smoking. Even subtle negativity will usually exacerbate existing problems. These students are likely scapegoats if they come to believe they do everything wrong.

Attention Deficit Reduction

Manage the Mind and Body: Focusing on one part at a time, show students how to control their bodies, then drill the skills into ingrained habits through varied repetitions. Train students to focus on the discussion by becoming "mind watchers" who watch the action with their minds. Use pictures such as the cartoons shown below, to convey these concepts, then give repetitions. Provide continuing reminders with signs, posters and checklists.

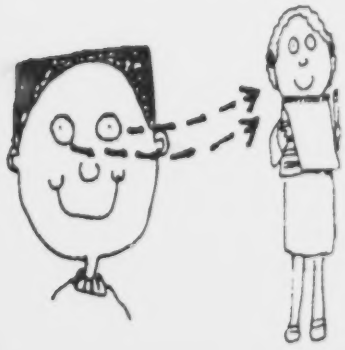
Raise the Hand: Since most schools don't have a formal curriculum to ensure that all school skills are taught, youth may never be thoroughly trained to perform this vital task. Demonstrate the "wrong" ways to hand-raise, then ask students to determine the "right" way. Have students make posters picturing both ways. Drill students to become "veterans" properly raising their hands.

Know What to Say: ADD/ADHD students may offer inappropriate content during discussions. Assist the students to list out appropriate and inappropriate content areas. Post the list prominently for future reference. A poster of a traffic signal light with a moveable pointer can alert students when to proceed, be cautious or stop.

Moderate How Long You Talk: Assist the class to select guidelines for how long to talk during discussions, and post these times. To aid in self-monitoring, pass a clock, egg timer or digital timer to students at the start of their turn talking.

"Red Flag" Times: Train students to anticipate, avoid or moderate the problems that can occur when a peer is disruptive. Use a red flag in role-plays to signal "red flag" times when students must maintain their behavior despite peer disruption.

Be Ready: Students may "freeze" or act up when called on by surprise. Aid students to develop a sentence to use when surprised.



Give Names to Target Behaviors

Slow-Rolling

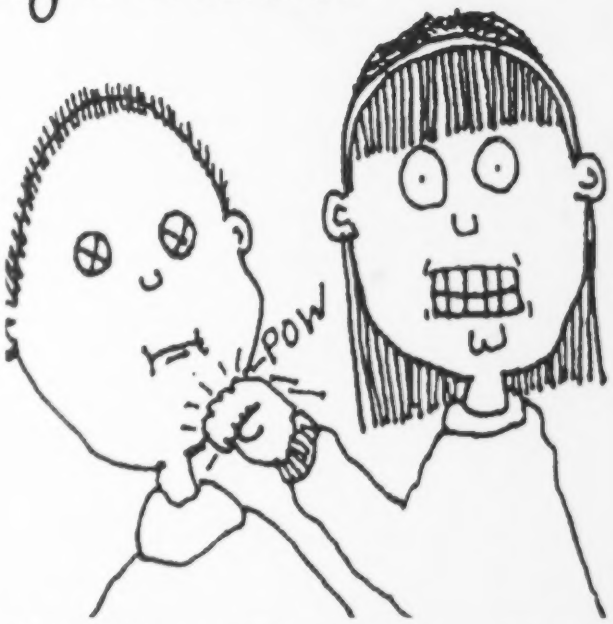
Pace-Setting Behavior

Speed-Racing Behavior

It's hard to change behaviors that don't have names; use terms that describe without negative labeling.

No Excuses Anger Control

All youth programs have expectations for youth to control their anger— but few sites systematically and comprehensively teach students to meet these expectations. Whether you expect math, science or anger control skills, until you teach it, students may not do it.



Especially if a child grows up in a violent home, lives on a violent block and watches violent TV, there may be little opportunity to understand what anger is and how to properly control it. The fist that is so troublesome in your setting, may be commonplace in the child's home or neighborhood. Here are some steps designed to rapidly improve the anger control skills of the angry child.

Temper and Tantrum Taming Techniques

Control is Vital

Like most of us, youth often resist making mandated changes until convinced of the need.
Strategies: Ask your students to identify jobs, businesses, careers, and sources of income they can successfully establish and let an out-of-control temper flare up or explode whenever they want.

Break Through Denial

The child may deny she has an anger control problem. Use peer pressure to vividly show the problem.
Strategies: Ask the peers to respond to questions about whether they fear the angry student's temper. Have the child track how often adults must say to them, phrases such as "stop yelling" or "calm down."

Teach About Anger

At home, anger may be hit or drank away. The child may have few opportunities to learn about anger, and how to positively manage it.
Strategies: Teach about the early cues of anger. Use a VCR to correct damaging misinformation such as "I can't predict when I'm going to be mad." Show the action frame by frame, aiding the student to see anger predictably developing.

Teach All Expected Skills

You'd never expect math skills until you taught them, because many students would lack those skills. Expecting skills without teaching them doesn't work with math— or with anger. Kids who don't learn anger control at home will likely be unable to meet expectations to control their temper at your site.
Strategies: When students fail to comply with rules, they need training, not just consequences. Comprehensively train students to comply with rules and expectations. During school detention, train students to moderate or improve the behaviors that necessitated detention time.

Address the Sources of Anger

Kids don't just become angry; they have good reasons. Address the causes, not just the hitting and other symptoms.
Strategies: Teach the difference between the sources and targets of rage. Often, teachers are targets viewed as sources. Teach about "outside anger" that comes to school.

The Four Most Bogus Beliefs About Angry Kids

Here are some thought-provoking ideas about angry kids that could change how you work with this population.

1 **Consequences Are the Most Effective Interventions** Consequences are not enough. Many kids would make more rapid and lasting changes if provided the training and motivation to do so. Consequences do not provide the skills, attitudes and motivation needed to comply. Just as a child expected to master science without training, may never be able to do so, the same is true with anger control.

2 **They're Just Mean Kids** Anger doesn't happen without cause. Most angry kids have been hit, sexually assaulted, neglected or somehow traumatized. They may look and act like victimizers but they are almost always also victims. The anger that is such a problem at your site, may have been the best way to stay alive or safe at home.

3 **They Should Just Stop** Kids can no more instantly control their anger than you can instantly shed 20 pounds. Requiring instant temper control is unfair and unrealistic. Change takes time for all of us. If you expect instant change, you may instead get constant problems

4 **There's No Valid Explanation** Most angry youth are also victims. Victims learn there are three ways to respond to abuse: capitulate, resist or accept. *(See illustration below.)* Many stay safe by resisting. Until given anger control training, along with help to address the sources of their rage, youth may resist all authority until taught that the resistance that has helped them cope with abuse, is unnecessary in safer settings.

Control the Uncontrollable Temper

Keep One Mistake from Becoming Many: Once mid-tantrum, kids often see no point in stopping, and often escalate or maintain the problem behavior, believing "I've already blown it." Teach students to keep one mistake from becoming many more.

Avoid the Downward Spin: Some youth mentally "beat themselves up" when they "blew it" again. Teach students to avoid the "beat up-blow up" cycle by acknowledging even small gains in anger control.

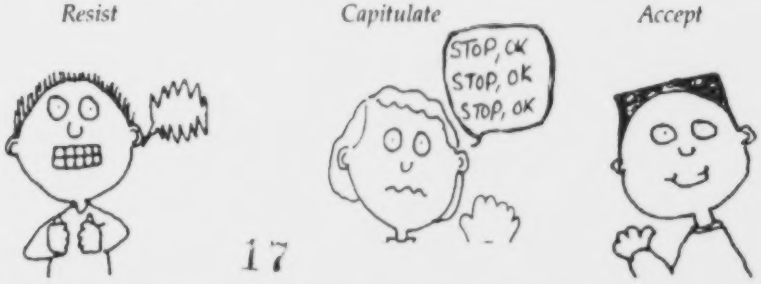
Get a Grip: Calm kids may hear only 10% of verbiage; angry kids even less. Use strategies that grab attention and defuse the situation with humor. Ask the angry youth to grab their arm. Once the student has a hand on their own arm, say, "Good, now can you keep a grip on yourself?" Many raging kids end up grinning.

Relate to the Real World: Make up multiple choice questions such as the following: *Paul loudly swears at his landlady when mad. He will discover: a) she doesn't mind vile language, b) she smiles when yelled at, c) she begins eviction proceedings immediately.*

Debunk Excuses: Ask each student to identify situations they believe are "impossible" times to maintain control, then assist their peers to confront and debunk each excuse.

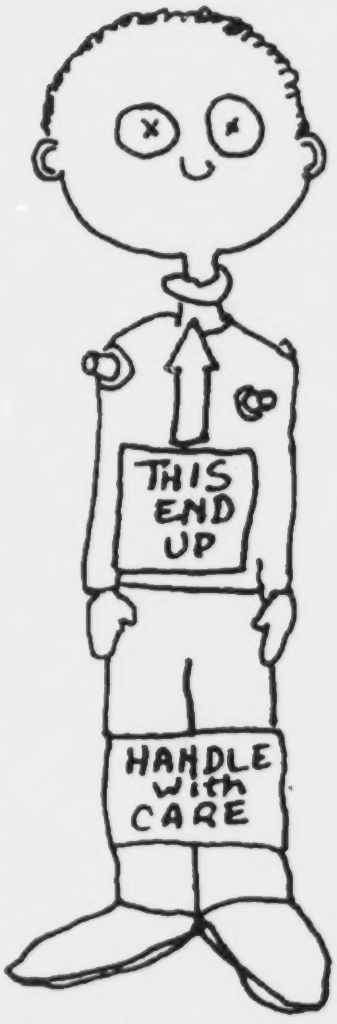
Watch Language: Students often say "I *had* to hit her." Teach youth to confront inaccurate language that deflects accountability. Ask students to "translate" misleading terms such as "barely touched him" to "punched him." Adults often say "don't hit", but the child's mind hears "hit...don't." Instead, say: "Keep your hands to yourself."

The Origins of the Angry Child's Resistance...May Not Be What You Thought



Angry kids are often victims who resist or capitulate to survive, and may have little experience cooperating.

Awaken the Sleeping Student



There is an old Native American saying that people "need to grieve a loss a full season", but when a child is a victim of physical assault, incest, verbal abuse or domestic violence, we often do not give them a full season to recover. Most don't even get a full six hours before they are back at your school or work site.

When a child "shuts down" at your site, they are often overwhelmed by trauma and crisis. When you face a serious crisis, you may hide in bed until you are ready to emerge. Children often don't have that option. To cope and recover, they must extract recovery time wherever they can, so they may withdraw while at your site instead of doing whatever they are supposed to do. Here are some guidelines for successfully awakening— and working with— sleeping students:

Techniques to Revive Sleeping Students

Identify Good Work Days

Like you, children can not become involved in work soon after a serious crisis or trauma. Ask the youngster to identify days that they are better able to work. Negotiate work on "bad" days.

Don't Wrestle for Control

The child has learned that when they are not in control of events, they are often the victim of events. They take control by becoming "invisible" and doing little or nothing. Sometimes, having control has helped these children minimize or stop abuse so they will often fight intensely to keep control at your site. By allowing the child to have as much control as possible, you can gain cooperation you'll never get otherwise. So, instead of saying "Do this," say "Would you rather do this now or later?" Often masters at seizing and keeping power, the harder you tug on the child, often, the more stuck they become.

Teach Mistakes are Okay

At home, making a mistake can mean getting hit or shamed, so shutting down and doing nothing can certainly seem the safest and wisest path. Teach that making mistakes is normal, and will not engender abuse at your site. Ask the student to write down on the top of a paper, a benign error she made. On the bottom of the page, she should write what she learned from making that mistake. Then have the student throw away the top of the paper and keep the bottom— a metaphor for how mistakes are vital to learning.

Moderately Praise Progress

At home, the child may hear how terrible they are. If you strongly contradict that belief by over-praising the child, the student may feel so uncomfortable that they will act-out to prove you wrong. It's as though suddenly a person was telling you that you were the most beautiful person on the planet; it might not fit with all previous experience, and could make you quite uncomfortable. Resist the temptation to "make up" for neglect or abuse at home by making a huge fuss about progress. Give moderate praise instead, or better yet, ask the child how they would like you to respond when they do something great.

Have Moderate Expectations

You may be tempted to set goals such as completing all overdue homework. While entirely realistic for other students, it may be far too hard for the shut-down student debilitated by severe family problems. All goals must be cooperative, not coercive. Select goals that are highly do-able, tiny steps. These children desperately need success, not more failure.

The Many Faces of the "Shirkaholic"

Here's who is in your class or group room, and why they so often shut down. All numbers are estimates for illustration.

15% **Substance Abuse in Family** These youth may be overwhelmed by caretaking an incapacitated parent, or managing family responsibilities. Already challenged by finding rent money or keeping dad from drinking, these youth may quickly give up when frustrated or challenged at school or work. If it is the child who is drug-involved, he may be preoccupied by facilitating and financing his own abuse.

10% **Serious Emotional Disturbance in Family** Caretaking a disturbed parent, or hiding that secret can sap the child's energy and interest. If the child is the disturbed family member, problems with aggressiveness, thought disorders or anxiety may cause them to quickly become unmanageable, withdrawn or confused when challenged socially or academically at your site.

30% **Sexual Abuse** One-third of girls may be sexually abused, and a startling 70-90% of all sexual abuse victims are incest victims. These youth are often uncomfortable being called to the front of the class, or having any attention focused on them. They want to be invisible and may shut down to keep people from learning their secret. They fear losing their family if they tell. Consumed with pain, there's little energy for anything else.

15% **Physical Abuse** These youth may be emotionally and physically terrorized and exhausted. Work or school are unimportant compared to the abuse. These youth may act out the rage they have inside. The anger is meant for the perpetrator but expressing it towards them would likely cause more violence, so the rage and resistance spill out in a safe place with a safe person who won't yell or hit-- you.

Transform Work Shirkers into Willing Workers

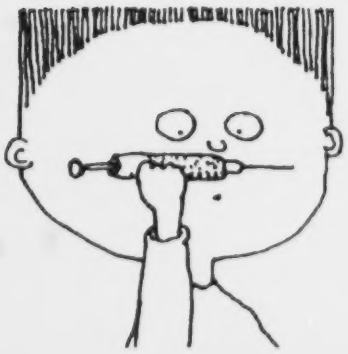
When Unsure, Ask: These students "despair-out" quickly when frustrated and have little tolerance for the normal set-backs that occur in relationships with adults. Consistently use cooperative approaches that demonstrate that survival behaviors from home such as shutting down are not needed in your setting— simple requests work quickly and reliably. Whenever you are unsure how to work with the student, ask the student what they want, an approach that almost everyone appreciates.

Acknowledge Problems: One reason kids shut down is that keeping the secret takes all their energy. Often, you can let kids know that you will not coerce any disclosure, but that you understand the student may be having serious problems at home. Inform the student that you will strive to avoid creating additional problems for them by striking a balance between your mandate to teach, for example, and being sensitive to issues from home. Stay alert for safety concerns; seek help from your supervisor if you're unsure whether to report abuse. Provide opportunities for disclosure.

Teach About Feelings: Students who frequently shut down often have a primitive understanding of anxiety, anger and fear, and act out feelings rather than work out feelings.

Use Effective Approaches: Routine interventions such as calling a student to the front of the room can be traumatic for an incest victim who may feel vulnerable and naked in front of a group. Assist students to identify approaches they like and dislike, then keep their requests in mind, and update their choices regularly.

Not To Blame: Help reduce the self-blame, resignation, despair and overwhelm experienced by these youth. Teach that children are never to blame for family problems, nor are kids able to control parents, siblings, or family problems like substance abuse, violence, poverty, abandonment or fighting.



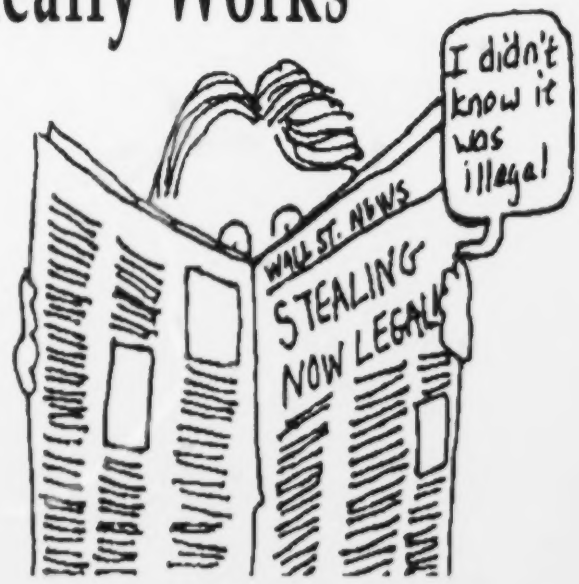
Who's Who in Your Class or Group

15% Substance Abuse, 10% Emotionally Disturbed, 30% Sexual Abuse, 15% Physical Abuse.

Here's an estimate of how many family problems can come into a mainstream setting with the students.

Thinking First Really Works

Many people assume that impulse control and judgement are innate— students either have these abilities or don't— these skills cannot be taught. In fact, students can dramatically improve their self-control through training. Here are the basic steps to building impulse control in youth who have chronic, serious deficiencies:



No-More-Excuses Impulse Control

Motivate Youth to Take Control

Students often fail to recognize the connection between their actions and results. To motivate youth to accept training to improve their impulse control, demonstrate how actions directly predict results.

Strategies: Create cartoons or stories that show examples of a student acting-out and receiving a consequence. Assist the students to determine who really has control over the results and which person (such as the teacher, parent or principal) is merely reacting predictably to behavior.

Slow Down the Action

Students often say that an incident happened so fast that they were unable to control themselves. To break these rapidly occurring events into small, more manageable chunks, "slow down" the action so the student can clearly observe the sequence of events.

Strategies: Have students look at cartoon recreations of incidents (see the cartoon strip on the next page) that show the step-by-step development of problems. Students will be able to identify early cues that a problem was occurring, find choice points and see how consequences are predictable results of misbehavior.

Show All the Choices

Students often say that they "had no choice". Help students recognize that they actually have many choices.

Strategies: Have students compete to see who can list the most number of choices that were available in a specific incident. They will discover hundreds of options exist.

Teach Predicting the Future

Students often say "I couldn't tell what was going to happen next," and they profess to be surprised by the consequences of their actions.

Strategies: Have students look at cartoons that show an incident beginning, but the final frame of the strip is blank. Students will be able to determine what is likely to occur in the final frame and accurately "predict the future."

Rate the Choices

Youth often pursue a course of action without evaluating the choice they are making, then they are surprised at the negative consequences that result.

Strategies: Teach youth to grade the available options before making a selection.

Check and Double-Check

Students often make behavior choices without conscious thought. Many youth tend to select problematic options, bypassing positive choices.

Strategies: Teach youth to select the "top choice" after rating all their options, then to check and double check their final decision. Show how making good choices leads to fewer bad "surprises" and many more better results.

The Best Impulsiveness Busters

Here are some unusual ways to assist impulsive youth to use judgement and self-control.

Debunk Excuses Have students debunk common excuses for impulsivity by drawing the real meaning of explanations such as "I forgot there was school today." Have students number and list out the excuses, then post. Now students can cite the number of the excuse rather than offer their usual, lengthy disclaimers. The other students will quickly and effectively confront the use of these now meaningless excuses.

Stop and Think Help students learn to consistently think first by aiding them to learn cues to trigger thinking first. To get their attention, make a red "stop and think" sign, and attach to a yardstick. When you see an impulsive act about to occur, without warning, suddenly insert the sign in front of the student's face. The student will be surprised, and can be cued to evaluate their next action.

Think-O-Matics Teach students to moderate impulsivity by developing phrases (such as "think first") that they can use to cue thinking. Help the students become "think-o-matics" by competing to say their phrase the most number of times in 15 seconds. The students will learn these phrases better than their names and phone numbers, and will retain and routinely use these phrases for many years.

Use Humor Here's a socially appropriate joke that is a great intervention. Ask the kids "What are the only two places that a delinquent or impulsive kid can think?" Answer: "Back of a police car and in the principal's office." Kids often recognize the truth behind that punch line and you can begin to work with them on moving the thinking up before the police car or principal's office, where the thinking could actually do some good.

In-Control Skills for the Out-of-Control

Preview Consequences: Help youth to experience "doing time" before "doing the crime". Students can be helped to research the likely consequences of impulsive acts such as drunk driving or assaultiveness, and to determine the likely adverse personal and monetary results. Particularly resistant youth can be exposed to the worst possible result that their actions could engender, and may need to view or sample a prison, homelessness, a detox center or a hospital emergency room.

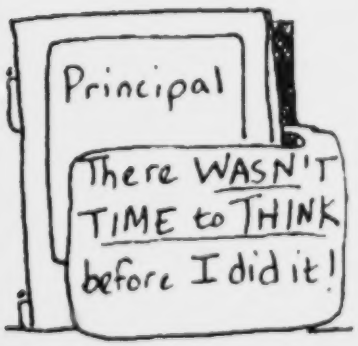
Less Losing It: Remember the last time you really lost your temper and were out of control? Remember afterwards how you hated that feeling of having lost control. Most youth share those feelings when they "lose it". To motivate youth to accept impulse control training, help them realize that they can learn to maintain control and avoid that awful feeling. Also, help students determine how their out-of-control behaviors will negatively impact their dreams for the future.

Teach Accountability: Students may say "she made me hit him" or "he made me laugh." Teach students that only they can control themselves by investigating who operates your mouth muscles when you laugh, or of your fist muscles when you hit.

Disrupt Self-Destructiveness: Expose self-destructive youth to data that will encourage them to begin to question their anti-self actions. Assist these youth to decide if they want to be "dream reachers", "dream wasters" or "dream destroyers". Ask them to find in nature, animals or plants that self-destruct. There are few.

Smarter Than a Rat: Bring in a rat (or stuffed animal) and teach the class about positive and negative conditioning. Show how the rat will return seeking positive rewards like food, but will avoid negative consequences like electric shock. Humorously assist the students to consider if they are "smarter than rats." Students will use this phrase to powerfully confront and question peers' subsequent self-destructive acts and attitudes.

Predict the Future by Breaking Action into Manageable Chunks



Books from Youth Change

The Breakthrough Strategies to Teach and Counsel Youth Lesson Series

The pioneering lesson series that delivers powerful, problem-stopping interventions to turnaround troubled youth. These state-of-the-art strategies train unmotivated, ADHD, delinquent, special ed, oppositional, withdrawn, non-compliant and defiant youth ages 5-18, to succeed. Each book has 20 ready-to-use lessons, many with handouts.

A Child's Guide to Surviving in a Troubled Family
Family Problems Are Never Your Fault
Work It Out Not Act It Out ...*plus 18 more lessons*

Build On-the-Job Success Skills
50 Ways to Leave Your Job— and Ever Work Again
The Boss is Always Right ...*plus 18 more lessons*

Learning to Like the Kid in the Mirror
So What's So Good About Me?
Nobody's Perfect All the Time ...*plus 18 more lessons*

Temper and Tantrum Tamers
Find Work Where Aggression Works
Turn Down the Heat at Home ...*plus 18 more lessons*

Turn On the Turned-Off Student
Putting Aside Problems During School
Cure the Causes of School Flu ...*plus 18 more lessons*

All-Time Favorite Lessons
Top Ten Ways the Teacher Can't Tell You Need Help
On Time Every Time ...*plus 18 more lessons*

Coping Skills Sampler
Only You Can Deny Your Gang-Dependence
The New, Improved Me ...*plus 18 more lessons*

Ready, Set, Go! for Independent Living
Are You Ready for a Typical Day as an Adult?
Seek and Detect Good Housing ...*plus 18 more lessons*

The Last Chance School Success Guide
Even You Can Get Along with Teachers
The Tassel is Worth the Hassle ...*plus 18 more lessons*

What Every Girl Needs to Know About the Real World
You Probably Can't Name the #1 Girls' Problem
Staying Safe, Starting Now ...*plus 18 more lessons*

The Quickest Kid Fixer-Uppers Series

The most answers in the least time. The book to turn to when you need concise, fast answers presented in a condensed, quick-access format. Each volume is packed with dozens of the best strategies to solve your most serious and persistent kid problems.

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Reduce the Deficits of Attention Deficit Disorder
No Excuses Anger Control ...*plus 6 more problem areas*

The Quickest Kid Fixer-Uppers Volume 2
Peer Skills: Don't Leave Home Without Them
Win the War of the Words ...*plus 6 more problem areas*

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In depth answers for a single problem area. Everything you need to know to completely understand the problem— and solve it.

Non-Compliance

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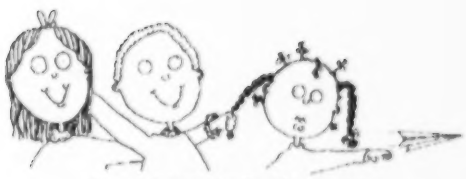

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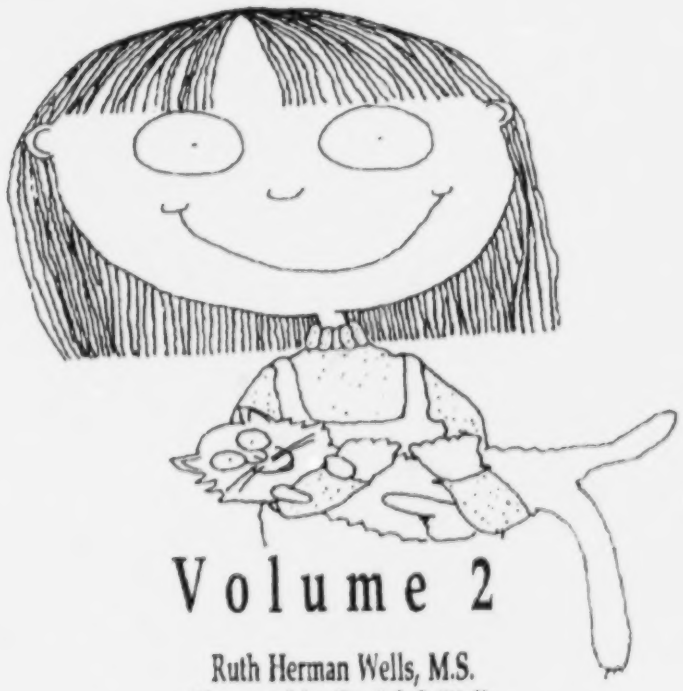

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Maximum-Strength Motivation Makers

Motivation is one of the many essential school skills that schools do not formally and systematically teach students. But, without motivation, kids don't look, act or sound like students.

Entrenched negative attitudes can make it seem impossible to teach unmotivated youth. Here are some of the most common reasons kids believe that they won't need school, and some of the most powerful ways to demonstrate otherwise.

More Magnificent Methods to Motivate

MYTH "I'm Gonna Be a Sports Star"

FACT Write up a "sports star contract" using big words. Present it to the youth. The student won't understand it but will sign. Inform the student that he has just signed over all future earnings to you. When he protests, rip up the contract, noting you wouldn't betray him, but sports teams, landlords and sales people might. Note that school can provide the skills needed to succeed as a sports star or whatever the student chooses to do.

MYTH "I'll Just Go On Welfare"

FACT Challenge students to locate the welfare office using the phone book and to secure and complete complex, required forms. Show news clips on welfare being severely reduced or completely eliminated. When students says school is boring, reply tongue-in-cheek, "Yeah, there's nothing going on at school that could ever match the thrills and excitement of waiting in line at the welfare or food stamp office."

MYTH "I'll Marry a Wealthy Man"

FACT Invite speakers from a displaced home-maker program to describe the terror they felt upon becoming widowed or divorced. Ask them to detail their reactions to being unable to perform essential everyday tasks such as bill paying, banking, correspondence and repairs.

MYTH "My Gang Will Take Care if Me"

FACT Project the youth into the future and ask them to determine how the gang can take care of them from jail or the grave. Gang involvement often includes dealing with the justice system so challenge gang members to read legal documents such as warrants, citations and bail agreements.

MYTH "I'm Just Gonna Have a Baby"

FACT Challenge these youth to read pediatric medicine labels, balance a check book and mix baby formula. Ask them to read housing rental contracts, newspaper classified ads and find affordable care for an ill child.

MYTH "I'm Gonna be a Rock Star"

FACT Place a phone in front of the student and ask her to call L.A. (or New York) and become a rock star. When the student struggles, note that school could help her reach this goal.

The 4 Types of At-Risk Students

By identifying the reasons that students are at risk, you can more effectively select and target interventions.

Anxious/Traumatized Students Family problems such as violence and incest exhaust these students. "Math can seem pretty irrelevant when you're living in a war zone," said one. These problems occur far more often than you suspect: 1 in 3 girls are sexually abused. These problems affect all types of kids. Offer aid for the emotional problems. Use cooperative ways to assist them to work. They quickly "shut down" under if you pressure them.

Anti-School Students These students hate school and everything associated with it. Motivation isn't necessarily the problem, attitude is. Use attitude adjustment interventions that create cognitive dissonance, aiding these youth to discover that their stereotypes about school are wrong. Make these students part of the system so they don't need to mess with the system to have power.

Unmotivated Students These are the students you may think of when you say "at-risk." These youth do not view school as important. When one of these students gripes about how dull school is, if appropriate, ask the students to say 30 times: "Do you want fries with that?" When the student refuses, saying it's too boring or stupid, you answer: "But, that may be what you'll be saying a lot if you drop out of school."

Distracted Students These youth are distracted by issues such as caring for an alcoholic parent or baby sitting younger siblings. Motivation may not be a concern. Distractions are the primary barriers to school success. The solution is to moderate, shift or eliminate the distractions, so perhaps Mom can be helped to find a sitter for the younger siblings, or the youth can attend night classes.

Awaken Sleeping Students

Read the Mail: Challenge students to manage the mail-- especially the misleading ads, contests and official-looking documents you receive. Ask students to determine how to respond to each item. When they flounder, remind them that school can give them the skills they need.

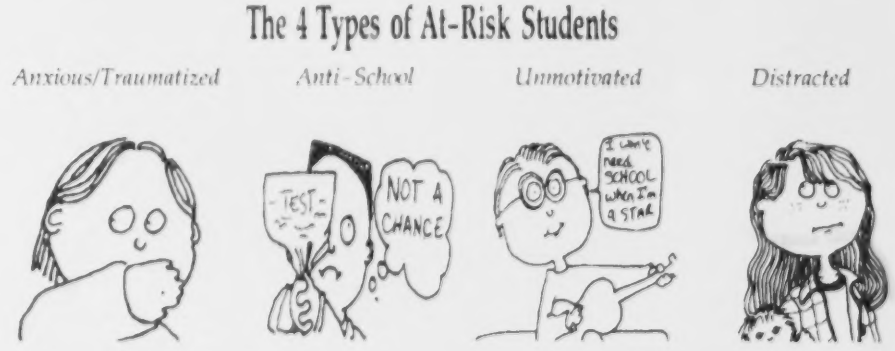
Are You Ready for Life in the Adult Lane?: Ask the students to manage a really bad day in an adult's life including reading a map to navigate a detour, balancing a checkbook, finding emergency child care, losing a wallet, and coping with a car breakdown on the way to work. When students struggle, remind them: education can help.

Messages on the Door: Ask students to manage the messages they could find on their apartment door. Include items such as this note from a property manager: "I can't fix the toilet until you give me $500." Let students know education can help.

Fate Strikes: Show students that their plans to always work at a certain factory or be taken care of by the gang or family, may not go predictably. Have students write slips of papers with their life path choices on them, then place the slips in a hat. To experience how these choices can change unexpectedly, students draw slips then trade their slips for new ones. Follow-up with visits from people who planned one path but ended up on another.

Ready for the Worst?: Ask students to detail how to manage minor to major disasters from finding late-night low/no cost health care for a burn, to coping with an earthquake or hurricane that cuts off all accustomed family, gang and community support and resources.

Can You Reach Your Dreams?: Ask the students to list all their dreams and goals, then review the list to see how many of the items require education.



Poor motivation is just one reason that students are at-risk. Use interventions that target the reasons.

Win the War of the Words

It works much better than conflict resolution, but you don't hear very much about it. Instead of waiting to resolve conflict that has already broken out, *conflict avoidance* offers the potential to avoid the problem altogether. Conflict avoidance also offers better preparation for the real world where pro-actively avoiding conflict nearly always works better than just retroactively resolving it.

Not all conflict can be avoided, so here are some of the best conflict avoiders— and conflict solvers— for the words that spark the conflict:

More Mouth Management Methods

Relate to Work

Students may believe that they will never need conflict avoidance skills.
Strategies: Disprove this assumption by asking students to name jobs and businesses they can do and be nasty whenever they want. There are none. Ask students to identify their dream jobs, and determine if this job can be successfully retained by someone who frequently verbally abuses others.

Words That Work

Students may be experts using problem communication, but inexperienced using peaceful words.
Strategies: Assist students to identify "words that work" and "words that don't work" in the jobs, businesses and activities they will want to do throughout their lives. Aid students to identify the times and places where problem words can be used, and where they should be avoided. Emphasize "right time and place" rather than judging words as good or bad.

Teach About Bickerbacks

Bickering can be a steady, but serious source of conflict.
Strategies: Teach about the bickerback cycle when conflict persists due to a continuing volley of taunts, insults and complaints. Train students to remain businesslike regardless of the comments of others, and to break out of the cycle. Train peers to confront each other on engaging in the cycle.

Conversation Skills

Chronic conversation problems don't have to be a source of conflict.
Strategies: Teach students to avoid using put-downs and shut-downs. Also assist students to identify their own "button pushers", then train them to not react problematically when they are exposed to those words. Train peers to avoid using button pushers.

Peaceful Words

Students may learn intimidation and yelling at home, but not peaceful conversation skills. Before they can converse in a civil manner, you— or the family— may have to teach them.
Strategies: Teach students opening, middle and closing lines. (See illustration at right.) Opening lines are words like "Hi" and open a conversation. Middle lines sustain the conversation; closing lines end it with a phrase like "bye." Show and discuss that hitting, pushing, and insults are not needed to converse.

Give a Quick Kick to Conflict

Unwelcome crowding, poking and touching are frequent sources of verbal conflict. Train students to respect personal space.

Play Space Invaders Work with one student at a time, or have students work in pairs, to learn about their personal space force fields. Walk 8 feet away from the student. Tell the child that when he hears the word "Go", he should close his eyes and you will walk towards him at a very slow pace, and that he should say "Stop" when you are "close enough." Do this from the front, back and sides, marking on the floor with masking tape where you are standing when the child says "Stop." The tape will form a rectangle called the "personal space force field". People who enter the force field without permission are "space invaders". Teach students to confront space invaders and respect others' force fields.

Play Space Bubble Teach young children about personal space using hoola hoops, called "space bubbles." Tell the students that the bubble is the amount of space that they are the boss of, and must guard, plus they should stay out of other people's bubbles. Have them move about with their bubbles without bumping into each other.

Red Light, Green Light Teach students to pro-actively deflect unwanted intrusions. Lay out large sheets of poster board on the floor with a red sheet closest to the student, a yellow sheet further away, and a green sheet furthest away. Drill students to be alert to peers on the green poster board area; to assertively warn peers who reach the yellow area; and to powerfully confront peers who approach the red area. Students can also be trained to enter only the green area near peers, avoiding yellow and red areas.

A Complete Overhaul for Words That Hurt and Maul

Right Time and Place: Teach students the "right time and place" for friendship and romance problems. Aid students to determine how bosses and customers will respond to these problems in the work place. Inform students that your site is the "Neutral Zone."

Build Empathy: Ask students to do "mask writing," and write from their opponent's point of view.

What Never Happened: Ask two warring students to each write outrageous versions of what never happened. As they laugh at the wildly imaginative events that never happened, assist these now more relaxed students to bring closure to what did happen.

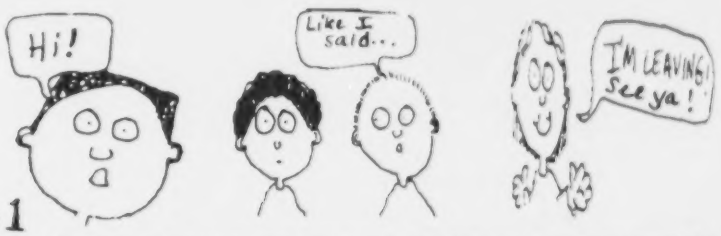
Say What?: Ask students who deny their verbal abusiveness, to survey peers and adults by asking how often these people must say each day to the student, phrases like "Stop!" and "That was mean!" Assist the student to recognize the implications of frequently requiring verbal admonishments.

I Could Stop: Challenge students who claim the ability to moderate verbal abusiveness once they are in the "real world" or on the job, to demonstrate this seldom-used ability for one month. If the student can do this, congratulate them and tell them that you expect this behavior to continue. In the more likely event that the student cannot stop the abuse for even a short amount of time, ask the student how they will be able to magically or suddenly stop the abuse in the "real world" or on the job.

Hands Off: Show victims of groping, what to say, when to say it, how to say it, and how to get help. Assist students to note if their responses are prompt, clear and consistent.

Reduce the Use of "Fightin' Words" by Teaching Words That Work

Opening Lines *Middle Lines* *Closing Lines*



If they don't learn at home, you may have to teach students how to converse peacefully.

What to Do When Children Suffer

It may start with beatings, incest, neglect, verbal abuse or a bitter divorce, and end with substance abuse, an eating disorder, promiscuity, withdrawal, self-harm or depression. When kids encounter trauma, hope and enthusiasm often vanish; despair and hopelessness flourish.

The methods you choose will help determine whether the child moves towards triumph or collaps A youth professional can be a lifeline for an abused child, or the person who dashed a child's one last hope. There may be less room for error with these vulnerable youth. Always carefully follow safety and abuse reporting standards. The following strategies can help you provide what one child called, "an oasis from the nightmare."

Children's Pain Relievers

Teach About Strength

Children can feel utterly overwhelmed by the enormous problems they encounter.
Strategies: Teach kids that challenges make them stronger, and like a broken toy, they can become strongest at the broken parts once repairs are made. Teach that fear and uncertainty are not only normal, but often unavoidable.

Find Strengths

Children can believe they lack courage to face crises.
Strategies: Kids often equate courage with not being scared. Teach that people can be both courageous and scared. This concept is especially helpful following a natural disaster, like an earthquake. Teach that "courage" just means that you don't give up.

Confront Unrealistic Ideas

Kids often believe they can stop a divorce or curtail dad's hitting.
Strategies: Teach kids no one can "make" anyone else do anything; people can only change themselves, not others. This can lighten the load the child carries.

Face Self-Blame

Kids who have goals yet face trauma, may "beat themselves up" for perceived failures.
Strategies: These youth can spiral downward quickly and severely. "I drank one beer so I might as well drink the whole case" is the logic, so initial mistakes often become the start of binges. Teach kids to stop beating on themselves and instead to pat themselves on the back for stopping when they did. By breaking up the beat up/mess up/beat up cycle, the cycle may moderate. Teach: stop as soon as you see the mistake. Also teach that making mistakes is normal and inevitable, no one's perfect.

Manage Pain and Anger

Pain can seem unbearable.
Strategies: It is pain that can fuel the eating disorder, addiction or paralyzing depression. Help the child to eliminate or come to peace with the pain, and reduce the need for the acting-out or acting-in that the child has been doing. Self-anger about acting-out or acting-in can be reduced by teaching that such reactions are normal, but must be modified or stopped.

Guiding Children Through Sadness: A Delicate Balance

Depression, disinterest and withdrawal are normal reactions to trauma, but the world still demands academic competence. Here's how to find a balance between problems at home and necessities like education.

Allow Recovery Time Academics and other responsibilities are important, but you can't hurry recovery time. Consider how much new information you could absorb during a crisis when skills like concentration suffer. Nothing can hasten their return. Most children are already recovering as quickly as they can.

Cooperation via Control Traumatized children learn they can sometimes stay safe by taking control. They also often believe that adults aren't trustworthy so getting the child to trust you may be impossible. Yet trust is the optimal way to gain compliance. Sharing control however is easy and almost as effective. Traumatized children are prepared to do anything to keep control, so only use cooperative approaches that share control.

Address the Depression When a child feels powerless to escape beatings, incest or other problems, paralyzing depression may result. Teach about depression: it is a normal reaction to serious problems. Expect small steps and up-and-down progress based on current crises; assist the child to have control and power in all areas they can.

Teach About Feelings At home, people may hit or stop talking when they are mad. That's all the child knows about that feeling. Teach children to manage emotions in socially appropriate ways. Until then, they may not be able to do it.

The Best Ways to Ease the Pain

Spare Security Items: The hat over the eyes, that heavy coat, the thumb in the mouth: things you may be tempted to forbid. For a child who has endured a bitter divorce or destructive hurricane, these may feel like all they have left. If you yank these items, you may take away the last bit of control or comfort. That child may comply with your directive, or stop showing up, but either way, you may have added to that child's load of problems. Instead of yanking items, transition from them, or permit them to continue.

Explain Pain: Teach pain is a normal, unavoidable reaction to trauma, that like a scab over a cut, it is how people heal. Teach children that like the scab, pain can't be hurried or eliminated, but normally, it does eventually dull, then fade.

Explain the Anger: Teach kids that anger about the divorce or hitting is normal, but it's not okay to blast others. Teach: it's okay to be mad, it's not okay to be mean.

Not the Only One: Since most kids grow up in just one home, they often believe that they're the only one to have a certain problem, or, alternatively, that everyone must have this problem too. Either way the child probably won't seek help. Teach about the types of family problems, and how and when to seek help.

No Announcement: Kids won't announce: "I was beat last night, so please don't expect much work from me today." Instead, you have to be alert for serious, but unmentioned problems and offer accommodations as necessary.

No IQs: In troubled homes, children may learn little useable information about feelings, yet emotions may drive their behavior. Teach: feelings do not have IQs, that you have to use your brain to manage unruly emotions.

Many Behavior *Problems* are Actually *Symptoms* of Pain You May Not See

Eating Disorder

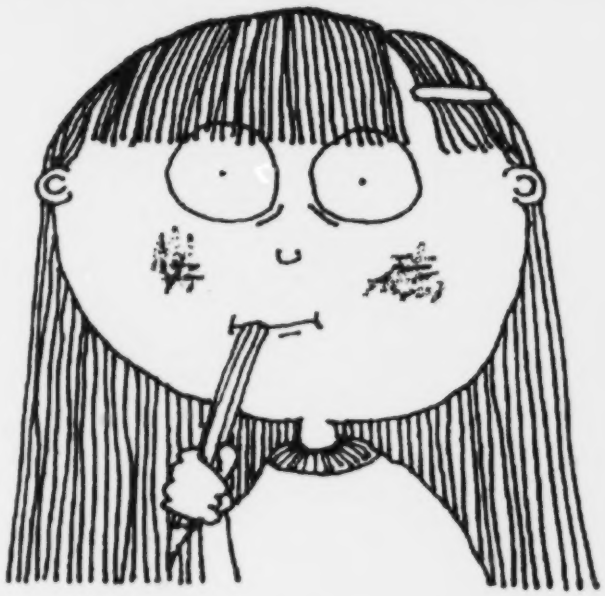
Substance Abuse

Self-Endangering

Fearfulness

The surface behavior isn't the real problem: the real problem is the underlying pain that fuels the behavior.

You Probably Can't Name the #1 Kid Problem



It affects more people than AIDS, drunk driving or any contemporary hazard you can think of— but you probably can't name it. You can't see it. You seldom hear about it. Yet it is the top issue that many of your students struggle with, affecting at least 1 in 3 of the girls, and 1 in 7 of the boys.

When we talk about this issue at all, we often call it "sexual abuse," but for most of the victims, the so-called sexual abuse is more accurately named "incest." Because many of us don't like to talk about incest, many teachers and counselors may not know the real truth about incest and sexual abuse. Not knowing can mean not seeing and not helping. Not helping can mean that the youngest victims of this invisible plague have nowhere they can turn for help.

The Truth About Sexual Abuse

MYTH

Not in My Community

FACT

Incest can happen anywhere there are families. Small towns and rural areas are not spared. No region of the country is a safe harbor. Incest victims rarely announce their presence and are unlikely to ever say "Excuse me, I was incested last night, there's no way I could learn math today." Instead, you must be alert for these youngsters.

MYTH

Not in My Ethnic Group

FACT

Incest has been called "relentlessly democratic," neither targeting or sparing any group. Children are incested whatever their race, skin color, ethnic origin or religion. There are no boundaries incest does not cross. Because any of your kids can be victims, disregard stereotypes about which "types" of kids live with incest.

MYTH

Not in Our Families

FACT

The incestuous family can live in a tenement or condo, a house or apartment. The family may be poor or wealthy. Throw out your stereotypes. The incestuous family looks like yours' or mine.

MYTH

Stranger Danger is the Real Concern

FACT

Sadly, sexual abuse by strangers occurs far less often than sexual abuse by a family member. While we may fervently wish otherwise, studies clearly show that the real danger comes from someone within the home, from someone the child loves and trusts. Unfortunately, the most likely perpetrator is someone the child calls "Dad." And Dad is just as likely to be chairman of the board as unemployed.

MYTH

But the Victims Would Tell

FACT

To sustain the vital family connection, children usually don't disclose. Not telling doesn't mean "not happening." At many of our workshops, a participant will question the incest data. When the female participants are asked, based on their *personal* experience, if the occurrence has been overstated, no female has ever disputed the numbers— except to note that the true rate is probably even higher. If you work with children, you work with incest victims— whether you know it or not, whether you deny it or not.

What Schools Can Do When Students Don't Tell

A few tips for teachers to use when working with incest victims— a population you often can't identify.

Provide Opportunities for Disclosure Incest victims often view their school as a haven and their teacher as the sole sober, positive adult contact they have. Provide the chance to disclose, but teachers should defer to counselors rather than make specific accusations. Before they disclose, tell students the abuse reporting requirements you follow. Expect some victims to be friendly then hostile as they struggle to keep their distance (and secret) from someone they trust enough to tell.

Limit Physical Contact Incest victims describe it as "torture" when an opposite-gender teacher touches them *appropriately* in class. As unfair as it may be to ask that teacher to modify a reasonable behavior, if the victims would speak out, they would ask to not be touched without their prior permission. Even a hand on the shoulder feels like another adult forcing unwanted physical contact.

Don't Coerce The days after being incested, victims often have little energy for school. They crave recovery time. Allow students to identify "good" and "bad" work days. They'll often work very hard on good days, if they are able. Coercion is ineffective as often these students are simply too traumatized to work.

Get Educated Learn about this epidemic. As school policies permit, educate your students on incest and how to get help. Be honest about the help that they're likely to receive.

What to Do When Victims Don't Self-Identify

If Perfectionism Paralyzes: Some victims hide the incest by being "the best." Unable to control anything at home, the child wants to control everything elsewhere. Never wrestle for control. Help them learn it's okay to make mistakes. Show the cycle of perfectionism, fear and paralysis that they fall into. Help them identify ways to ease or avoid the paralysis.

When Problems Overwhelm: Ideally, all students have access to a counselor, but for those who don't, provide time to talk. Since a student won't say "I was incested last night and can't concentrate on math," ask general questions such as "Did you have a tough time last night?" then offer recovery time as needed. Students can be allowed to draw, write or observe.

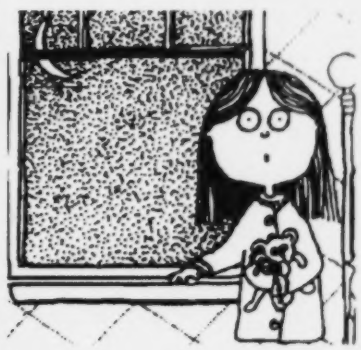
Believe Allegations: Kids seldom lie about incest unless a custody battle or similar situation exists. Immediately report and gain appropriate services for all youth who allege incest. Don't believe claims that victims have who have repressed ("forgotten") the trauma, are experiencing "false" memories. This idea is not only wildly inaccurate but, if heeded, your disbelief could victimize the child as severely as the original trauma. You may clarify information, never argue it.

Understand the Anger: Keeping the secret is the top priority, but it's often hard not to tell a favorite adult. The student may push you away or be hostile to keep you at a safe distance, then worry you'll be angry, critical or withdraw.

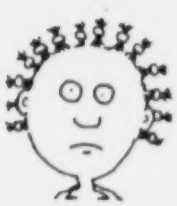
Don't Pressure of Berate: Coping and keeping the secret takes all their energy. Although generally, they'd prefer to comply with your requests, victims are often simply too overwhelmed and distracted. Pressure won't help, and will likely hurt.

Looking Good Doesn't Mean Feeling Good: Don't assume the honor student, class president or cheerleader could not be victims. Looking good is a common way to cover up. Grown victims often say that when they were young, no one ever even suspected.

This is How the Incested Child May Often Feel



Dirty



Damaged

Different

Author Susan Forward developed these "Three D's of Incest" to portray how the victim may feel.

Stop Violence Before it Strikes

Youth violence is not a chance occurrence that suddenly strikes like a spreading virus. Students don't "get violent" like they "get a virus." Too often it takes a frightening event to trigger concern, but the time to address violence is long before it happens at a frightening level. Combating violence requires an on-going, systematic effort that offers not just skills, but also powerfully shapes and maintains the motivation to be peaceful.

With the exception of conduct disordered youth—children who may have no remorse or conscience—anger is nearly always a precipitating factor for violence. To reduce or avoid violence, comprehensively teach students how and why to be peaceful, and address the underlying causes.

Total Temper Tune-Up Techniques

Vent Anger

Anger is the fuel for most violence. Find and address the sources of anger. Anger is a normal response to problems like abuse and neglect. Anger has to come out some way yet most kids are unaware how much anger drives their misconduct.
Strategies: Offer time to vent. Teach the difference between sources of rage and targets of rage. Teach appropriate ways to vent. Encourage vigorous physical exercise, and attempt to identify and moderate the sources of the anger. Structure leisure time, and impart a sense of inclusion and worth.

Build Motivation

Many youth see no reason to moderate their aggressiveness. Provide powerful reasons to be peaceful.
Strategies: Teach students that hurting others often hurts them too— via fines, court sanctions, etc. Help students identify the financial and "personal pain" costs of their actions. Ask them to identify jobs or businesses they can do and be violent. Ask potential drug dealers and gang members to locate "old" dealers and gangsters— there are few, and they're often locked up or distressed.

Back in Control

Most kids do not like surprising themselves with their own bad behavior, yet much violence is impulsive.
Strategies: Use a "stop and think" sign to cue and drill alternative behaviors; slow the action into manageable chunks via cartoons that break down events. Drill students to manage potential problem situations especially those involving peers who may encourage misconduct.

Teach Skills First

Expecting peaceful behavior without first teaching it is like expecting algebra without first teaching it. Kids who grow up in violent homes, watch violent TV and live in violent neighborhoods, have little opportunity to learn peaceful conduct.
Strategies: Schools and agencies need comprehensive, systematic plans to train and motivate kids to be peaceful. School plans must cover K-12 and be systematic. This no-risk effort can produce rapid, lasting change and can enhance or replace often under-utilized times such as homeroom, study hall, detention and in-school suspension.

Turn Down the Heat

Violence is not the problem— it's the symptom of many familial, social and emotional problems. One important way to reduce youth violence, is to reduce the anger and agitation that drive it. Kids who live in troubled homes often have little experience positively managing anger. To aid them to pro-actively spot and manage anger, teach them about the 4 kinds of anger:

one **Immediate Anger** *What it is:* Someone just did something that infuriated you. *The goal:* Watch for the surge of anger; stay peaceful while resolving the problem. If necessary, leave to cool down, or put your fists in your pockets. Strive to use words to react then find cooperative solutions. Remind yourself of the likely consequences of out-of-control behavior.

two **Brewing Anger** *What it is:* Anger that starts small, but mulling it over, you become madder. *The goal:* Notice you are getting madder so you can control it. Be ready to avoid or end unplanned outbursts. Use words to react, limit brooding. Avoid "beating yourself up" after an outburst; instead praise yourself for stopping, and avoid the anger-despair-anger cycle downward.

three **Accumulated Anger** *What it is:* Anger built up over a long time even though the anger-provoking event may have stopped. *The goal:* Stay aware of chronic agitation. Learn what triggers outbursts. Express anger appropriately in words, art, poetry, sports or play. Seek an end to current anger-provoking events, or direct amends for past events. Avoid victimizing others or self-endangering to vent pent-up anger.

four **Leftover Anger** *What it is:* Never-ending anger from the past. *The goal:* Put the anger to rest by talking out the fury. Art, physical exertion, poetry or play can supplement talking. Learn to see rather than minimize the damage you do to others and yourself.

The Very Best Violence Busters

Do You Control Your Anger— Or Does It Control You?: Ask students to track how much their anger drives their behavior by counting the time spent in arguments, fights, outbursts and the consequences that result.

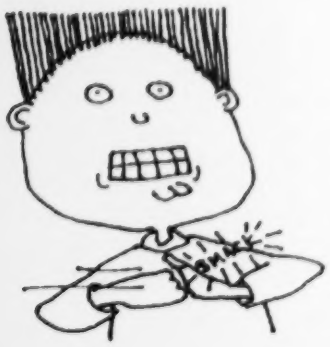
I Could Control Myself— If I Wanted: Challenge students who claim the ability to moderate their aggressiveness by asking them to demonstrate these unused skills for several months. In the unlikely event that the student succeeds, just offer praise. In the likely event that the student fails, ask how the youth plans to magically acquire this ability in the future if they are unable to do it now.

But I'll Deal Drugs: Confront this belief by asking the student to consider how effectively they can deal drugs once they have assaulted and harassed their suppliers and clients.

I'll Control Myself When I'm Grown: Ask how temper control will improve later if it hasn't yet. Ask students to identify adults who never mastered these skills, and to indicate if they would "like" the problems these adults encountered.

In the Work World: Relate aggression to students' goals. Use humorous multiple choice questions such as: Kwan Lee tantrums when mad. She wants to be a hair dresser. She will find when she screams in rage that a) customers don't even notice her loud yelling, b) customers walk out very quickly, or c) customers come from all over town to have their hair cut by the tantrumming hair dresser.

See for Yourself: Use videotape to show violence that's denied. Stop the tape to show choice points when other actions could have been taken.



Before Students Act Peacefully, You May Have to Teach Them How

Teach youth to recognize and positively manage the 4 types of anger that may lead to violence.

Reach and Teach Children from Troubled Homes

Mom may be an alcoholic, Dad may be physically abusive. If their child shows up at all for school or counseling, she may arrive tired, injured, inadequately clothed, and perhaps scared, upset or angry.

Although she may not tell you, last night the child may have been the victim of incest, verbal abuse or a beating. Home may be a car or a noisy, overcrowded, unheated apartment. Now they are in your group or class room and your job is to teach or counsel them. Here's some steps to reach and teach or counsel youth from very troubled homes.

Tips to Help Kids from Troubled Homes

Align with the Child

If the child is often hit or yelled at by adults at home, that youth may expect abuse from you. The child may arrive angry, defensive or unwilling to comply with even the simplest instructions.

Best Interventions: Let the child know that you will not yell or belittle them. Ask them to suggest ways to modify their behavior problems— ways that would be acceptable to you and them. Tell the youngster that you would like to be on their side, not another problem.

Realize Bad Behavior is a Survival Tool

It's easy to believe that some youth are just "bad" kids who deliberately refuse tasks, maliciously lash out or willfully "shut down" unnecessarily. (See cartoon on the next page.) In reality, these youth are simply doing the best they can to cope with abuse. For example, at home, "doing nothing" may be the best way to avoid being noticed and hit. However, at school, doing nothing is usually a problem.

Best Interventions: Let the youth know that you realize there may be problems at home, and that you don't want to add to those difficulties. Stress that you want to find cooperative ways to work together— ways that take into consideration the impact of family problems.

Provide Information and Recovery Time

Math can seem awfully irrelevant the morning after an incident of incest or a physical attack. Just as you would, the victim needs time to begin to mend before being able to focus on other tasks.

Best Interventions: Provide basic education on addiction and other family problems so that youth understand what is happening to them. Teach children to work out instead of act out family problems. Youth will need recovery time before they can work at schooi, and may act out otherwise. Youth can learn positive coping methods from peers by having the students devise answers to "Dear Abby"-type letters about family problems. Cartoons, pictures and stories about coping successfully with family problems can also help.

Help Children Revise Expectations

Some children continue to attempt to expect what their troubled family can't deliver. A child may continue to pine for an absent mother's return, or the cessation of an alcoholic father's lifelong drunken abusiveness. When the family can not or will not meet these hopes, the child sometimes emotionally collapses.

Best Interventions: Assist children to stop attempting to extract what may never happen. Demonstrate how chickens quickly learn to stop pecking for food from an empty container. Give that image to children from homes where the clinical assessment is that significant change is extremely unlikely to occur. Teach children that waiting for mom's return may be like the chicken waiting for food, that it may not happen, and it is best to be prepared for any outcome. The fewer times the child's hopes are raised and dashed, the less behavior spill-over may occur.

Daily First Aid

Here are some effective interventions to address a few of the problems commonly exhibited by children from troubled homes.

Talk It Out Instead of Act It Out Many youths are screamed at or beaten at home, then arrive at your site and their anger spills over. At home, they risk more abuse if they express anger, but anger has to come out one way or the other. Help them express it in ways that won't create additional problems. Before expecting them to work, provide time away from the group to yell or complain, hit a punching bag, take a quick walk, or write or draw.

Increase Compliance Making a mistake at home can be a sure way to court a beating. To establish some control and safety, the child often tries to "disappear" and pass unnoticed. You can not force youth to stop this behavior that they've learned reduces abuse. Usually, this behavior will change only gradually and only if the youth realizes they can keep some control and remain safe. Agreements on how much work the youth will do must be cooperative. Increases must be made in tiny increments to avoid fear over the loss of control. Tell them that you won't hit or yell if they make mistakes.

Lighten the Load Many children from troubled homes believe that they can fix family problems. This heavy load impedes concentration and attendance. These children may stay home to limit mom's alcohol use, for example. Help these youth learn that people can only change themselves, not others. Have them log their efforts to discover that their help doesn't have lasting impact. Help them learn from peers in similar situations, then sort their problems into "Things I Can Change" and "Things I Can't."

Self-Care Tips for Children from Troubled Homes

It's Not Your Fault: Teach that children can't cause abuse, divorce or neglect even if they misbehaved at school or at home.

All Families Have Problems: Help students understand that all families face problems of one kind or another, whether it's the refrigerator breaking or losing the family dog. Stress that no family is "problem-free." Note that some families have especially serious problems like hitting or drug abuse, but is not "weird" or "unusual" if it does; others deal with this too.

Not the Only One: Discuss that children may feel as though no one else could have a family situation like they do, but that isn't true. Teach that problems like alcoholism and child abuse actually happen a lot.

You Have the Right to Be Safe: Teach students that the law says no one has the right to beat, kick, hit or abuse them, and that if they're not sure if they're safe, ask a teacher or counselor.

Work It Out, Not Act It Out: Teach students to keep one problem to just one, and not make many more. Teach: Don't turn one problem into many more by hitting, stealing or skipping school. These won't solve anything, but talking about it possibly could.

You're Not a Bad Person: Especially if they are yelled at a lot, children may think that they are awful. Teach that's not true.

You Can't Change Your Family: Teach kids that as much as they may want to help: you can't change anyone but yourself. Discuss that a kid can't somehow stop mom's drinking or dad's hitting no matter what they do.

To Best Help Your Family: Teach that the best way to help the family is to help yourself. Teach kids to show the family it's possible to "make it" without gangs, drugs or violence by finishing school and getting help for problems, that's the only way out that reliably works.

Problems from Home Can Accompany the Child

What you can't see, may be the genesis of that "nasty child's" anger and other problems.

Peer Skills: Don't Leave Home Without Them

Just about everyone agrees that it's the family's job to teach basic social behaviors such as peer interaction skills. However, over the past 10 to 20 years, many youth professionals report seeing more and more families that cannot or will not do that job. If the child lacks essential peer skills, it may be difficult to include that child in your setting.

Early identification and intervention is important to remedying peer skill problems. Adolescents can spend years repeating serious, problem behaviors that have been left unaltered. The following interventions are designed to give basic peer skills to kids of all ages. Although these methods will be more effective with younger children, it is important that all peer skill problems be remedied— whether by you or the family, and better late than never..

Shape Up Sagging Peer Skills

Start-Up Skills

From the start, some youth act offensively.

Strategies: Ask students to observe another group during an unstructured time such as lunch, and report the good and bad ways they see peers initiating contact. Ask students to identify the likely reactions of the victims of problematic initial contact, and to suggest and demonstrate alternative words and actions.

Body Control

Students who inappropriately touch others, may need more than reminders or time-out to make effective or lasting changes.

Strategies: Use rag dolls to demonstrate where hands, feet and other body parts do and do not belong. Ask students to identify jobs they can do if they have problems controlling body parts; there may be few.

Mouth Control

In some homes, swearing and yelling are commonplace.

Strategies: Don't assume your students know what to say, when to say it, how to say it, and how often to say it— unless you teach them first. Assist students to identify quantifiable guidelines that they can compare their verbal output with. Aid teens to identify the right time and place for focusing on "hormone-related" topics.

Property Control

Property management skills may have to be taught if students do not already know and use these skills.

Strategies: Teach how and when to touch other people's personal property. Identify problem behaviors such as grabbing, mutilating and "borrowing." To assist students to care about others' property, ask them to describe how they feel when their own property is taken or abused.

Notice Reactions

Students may miss essential social cues.

Strategies: Teach students to notice verbal and nonverbal cues, and to check for problems before taking action. Suggest queries such as "Is that okay?"

News You Can Use: Problem Peers in Peril

National news events can be used to provide dramatic examples of the consequences that can follow peer behavior problems.

Opposite-Gender Skills Have students review the problems faced by Oregon's former senator, Bob Packwood. Students can identify Packwood's problem peer behaviors —inappropriate touching and talk— and the consequences. Ask students to determine the consequences of such actions in their own potential career or business.

Diversity Skills Youth who followed the O.J. Simpson murder trial, heard about the wildly inappropriate comments allegedly made by former L.A. Police Detective Mark Furman. Assist students to identify gender and racial bias as critical peer problems, and to note how Furman's intolerance created dire consequences for individuals and communities. Assist students to identify appropriate and inappropriate racial and gender comments, and to guess how problem remarks will be addressed in their future work place.

Playing Fair Recap the saga of ice skater Tonya Harding allegedly arranging for an injury to her skating rival. Ask students to determine the consequences, identify alternatives to violence, and the likely results of playing fair.

More Diversity Skills On a 1996 national radio show, Senator Alfonse D'Amato of New York used a mocking Japanese accent to ridicule the O.J. Simpson case judge, who was of Asian descent. Ask students to explain why this is unacceptable and to identify the other problems that can develop from this type of behavior.

Peer Skill Repair

Button Pushers: Assist students to identify words or actions that can "make" them become agitated, then desensitize them to those "button pushers" in role-plays where increasingly serious button pushers are offered, and students are assisted to moderate their reactions. Teach students that an agitated reaction fuels the victimizer and encourages additional name-calling, but neutral or mild reactions are dull and may cause the victimizer to move on to a more exciting target.

Bias Busters: Ask students to determine what they want to be judged by, and suggest age. Permit students to disparage that then ask them if gender, race, language or skin color are good ways to judge people. Assist the group to determine that external factors are not good measures, then ask them to determine and discuss what they do want to be judged by.

I Don't Need to Get Along With Others: Ask students to identify jobs and businesses they can successfully do and be socially inappropriate. Assist students to determine there may be none. Ask students to think of adults they know who have severe social problems, and to consider their results. Students may find that these people face on-going, major distress.

Are You Someone's Puppet?: To teach victims to take back control from victimizing peers, tie a 4 foot long piece of yarn to the student's wrists then stand on a chair above her, pulling the yarn in the manner of a marionette puppet. Ask the student if she wants to remain the "puppet" of the victimizer. Encourage the student to seize control of the yarn, then work with her to develop a plan to "cut the strings" and take back control from the victimizer.

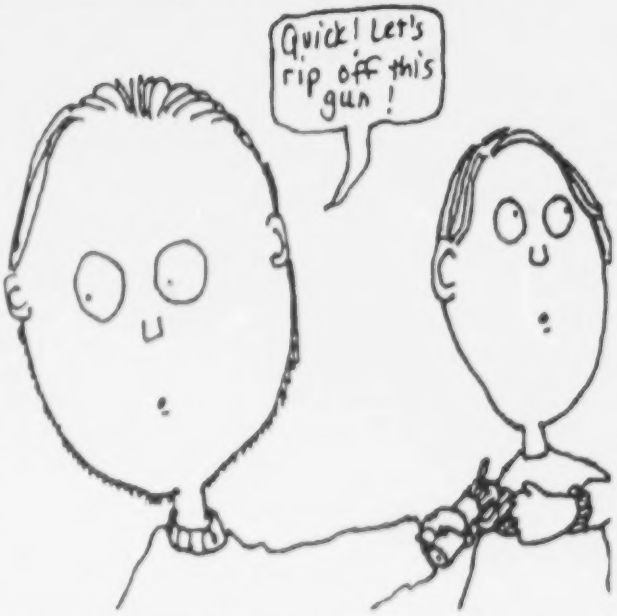
Culture Clash: Divide students into 2 groups. Each group will be given the task of either buying or selling items. Privately provide separate instructions to each group on how they may behave and have these instructions conflict. For example, one group may talk only to blondes; the other group may not permit blondes to respond right away. The resulting conflict will mirror real-life cultural clashes and can be followed with a discussion on identifying, understanding and managing cultural differences.

Teach Students to Reduce Behaviors That Encourage Peer Set-Ups

These behaviors are the most common ways that students encourage peer set-ups.

Control "Uncontrollable" Conduct Disorders

Kids who seriously victimize others, can seem impossible to manage. Some of these kids who chronically and severely hurt others, can be labeled "conduct disorders." In mainstream settings, just a small percentage of your kids are likely to be conduct disordered. In the justice system, they are common. The term can be confusing, and how to successfully manage these hard-to-control youth can be even more confounding.



Only mental health professionals are qualified to diagnose conduct disorders. Accurate diagnosis is crucial because many of the best methods to manage conduct disorders are very different from the relationship-based approaches used with other children. Here's some facts about conduct disorders, and some inventive ideas to best manage them.

Must-Know Facts About Conduct Disorders

FACT

Cost vs. Benefit is the Motivation

Sit-com character, Eddie Haskell from "Leave it to Beaver," offers a quick picture of a conduct disorder. Abusive to the weak, and over-adaptive towards those he perceived as powerful or useful, this cost-benefit motivation is the hallmark of the conduct disordered youth who has limited ability to empathize with or relate to others.

Best Interventions: Take charge of the cost-benefit ratio by raising the costs. Otherwise, the conduct disordered child may think, "I'm gonna kick that kid. The worst I'll get is detention."

FACT

Consequences Offer Control

You don't hit others because you'd feel bad. The conduct disorder isn't guided by empathy or remorse.

Best Interventions: It's the high cost of consequences, that stops misbehavior. Ensure consequences are "too costly."

FACT

Self-Interest is Paramount

Kids who can empathize, often are moved by concern for others. The conduct disorder is generally only concerned with what s/he wants or likes.

Best Interventions: Show that hurting others is not in their self-interest by implementing disliked consequences for misbehavior. Teach: hurting others often also "hurts" them by generating disliked consequences.

FACT

Power May Command "Respect"

Conduct disordered youth often operate on a utilitarian basis. People viewed as powerful or useful, may be treated more respectfully and compliantly because of the benefits this type of behavior can generate.

Best Interventions: If you are perceived as a "pawn", become a power by gaining the "muscle" the child respects. For example, the parole officer can "empower" you by letting you have significant input into the lock-up time the child gets.

FACT

Empathy is Limited

A conduct disorder may begin to form when an infant has no caring nurturer to bond with. It may be a loss that cannot be "fixed" later: the ability to care may be impaired forever.

Best Interventions: To lessen consequences, the child may claim to "feel bad" about again hurting others, but be very wary of expedient claims of remorse.

Many Truths About Kids Don't Fit Conduct Disorders

Much of the otherwise good, conventional wisdom about working with kids, doesn't fit conduct disordered youth. Here's the most common mismatches.

Act in a Consistent Manner Many conduct disordered kids "read adults like open comic books." They are very adept at anticipating consequences, gauging reactions and spotting vulnerability. They use this information to manipulate effectively. Consistency becomes a problem when the conduct disordered youth can predict the likely consequence of misbehavior and decides to risk it. By "zig-zagging" and varying your response, the child is reluctant to risk an unexpected consequence with too high a cost.

Consequences Must Be Fair Many adults can't quite determine "for sure," the conduct disordered child's role in misbehavior, and thus refrain from instituting consequences unfairly. Many conduct disordered youth perceive this and exploit it. If permitted at your site, tell the child you no longer guarantee fairness because in the "real world," bosses, landlords and police will not "play detective" and strive for absolute certainty and fairness; they'll use probable cause instead— meaning sometimes they may give sanctions "unfairly."

Develop a Bond Because they may never have bonded during the critical period in infancy, conduct disorders may be unable to genuinely care about others. Relationship-based approaches that work well with other kids, may be irrelevant and ineffective, and easy to exploit. Remember: you'll have a relatively positive relationship with the conduct disorder only as long as you have value to him. After that, you're expendable.

Be Predictable Conduct disordered youth often learn the adults' behavior patterns, such as a teacher's tendency to reduce consequences if a student shows remorse. Spot your patterns, then vary them with this population.

Bring Order to the Conduct Disorder

Channel the Manipulation: Being a manipulator can be positive. Manipulation only becomes a problem when it's destructive. Great careers can be built by those who effectively, legally and appropriately manipulate. Convincingly show and teach that.

Don't Guess: If you can't tell exactly how much misbehavior the conduct disordered child has done, don't fake it. The more disturbed the child, the better their "radar." Conduct disorders are often frighteningly perceptive. Instead, if permitted by your site policies, tell them that just like bosses and police in the "real world", if you simply suspect misdeeds, there may be consequences; certain proof will not be needed.

Assume the Worse: If you can't tell if you are being conned, you probably are. Simulate the "real world" where bosses and landladies don't invest huge amounts of time searching for the truth; they institute consequences.

Project Problems into the Adult World: For example, relate hitting classmates to hitting co-workers. Challenge the students to "find work where that behavior would work." There may be none.

Stay Detached: If you get mad, the conduct disorder may view it as a victory: they "made you" lose control. Be on guard: these perceptive youth often choose the "worst days" or very personal, unexpected ways to "push your buttons" and you to the breaking point.

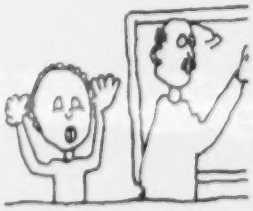
Don't Fake It: Many conduct disorders "read vibes." If you're scared of them or unsure if you can manage them, that concern has more impact than actions you take. Get training, work through concerns.

Here's What a Conduct Disorder Can Look Like

The Negative Leader

The Sex Offender

The Disrupter



Lacking empathy for others, conduct disordered youth may take aggressive roles such as these.

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